

## Lawyer says Ocalan left Europe

BONN (R) — Abdullah Ocalan, chief of the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) and Turkey's most wanted man, is in hiding outside Europe, a German newspaper on Friday quoted his lawyer as saying. Britta Boehler, one of a team of lawyers representing the Kurdish guerrilla leader, told the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* daily the Netherlands recently refused Ocalan entry but denied reports his plane had tried to land there. A Turkish official said earlier this week Ocalan's plane was held up at a remote Russian military airport before he made his way to Rotterdam airport, where he was turned back. Another Turkish official said Ocalan had then flown to Greece and "in all likelihood returned from whence he came," implying he went back to Russia. Boehler denied this.

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## Jordanians pray for King Hussein

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanians prayed last night for His Majesty King Hussein, who returned home Friday in crit-

ical condition after cancer treatment in the United States. The King is sustained by a life support system, a senior official said Friday.

"The King wanted to [be] among his people," the offi-

cial told the Jordan Times. "He is in a coma and is being sustained by life support machines." The official said the Cabinet is on standby for any developments.

The King was received at

Queen Alia International Airport by HRH Crown Prince Abdullah, HRH Prince Mohammad and HRH Prince Hassan and other family members. Prime Minister Fayed

Tarawneh, Parliament leaders, and other senior officials were also present at the airport.

Shocked Jordanians, who have known no other leader for the last 47 years, have been glued to their television screens and radios waiting to hear news of the King's health. Mosque preachers and worshippers prayed for his recovery.

While foreign news agencies and television stations claimed the King was "clinically dead," Prime Minister Fayed Tarawneh told Jordan Television the King's condition was "critical" and cautioned foreign news agencies and televisions against "speculation."

"They [news agencies and satellite stations] have despatched many reports full of speculation. I hope the media will quote only the official announcements from the Royal Court or the government," the premier said during the evening news broadcast. "King Hussein is receiving intensive care and he is under constant observation. We must realise that many of the reports are sensational and aim to achieve scoops."

In contrast to Jordan Television's coverage only two weeks ago when the King returned to a tumultuous welcome, there were no live broadcasts and reports, and television cameras were kept

far away from the airport and Al Hussein Medical Centre, where he was receiving treatment.

The longest serving ruler in the Middle East, accompanied on the flight back by Her Majesty Queen Noor and five of his children and doctors, was rushed to the intensive care unit at the hospital, after losing his seven-month battle against cancer.

Police were deployed along the 40-kilometre road to the medical centre, west of the capital.

Hundreds of people have kept vigil in the cold and rain outside the hospital gates. Royal family members were at the King's bedside.

The King decided to fly back home Thursday from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota after suffering internal organ failure. Jordan Television's Channel 2 reported. He had undergone another course of chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant in an effort to arrest a relapse of the cancer.

King Hussein returned to the U.S. hospital on Jan. 26,

one week after arriving in Amman to an exuberant homecoming, after doctors declared him fully recovered from non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

During the effusive week, the King surprised Jordanians by replacing Prince Hassan as crown prince after



serving 34 years with his eldest son, Prince Abdullah.

Immediately after announcing the change in succession, his left hand gripping a cane, he rushed back to the Mayo Clinic after suffering from fever and low blood count. Omens signs of a relapse.

For the last 10 days, 37-year-old Prince Abdullah, a major general, has been acting as Regent and handling the affairs of state.

An official told the Jordan Times that the Cabinet may name Crown Prince Abdullah as Regent if the King was

not out of his coma Saturday.

Prince Abdullah will be named Regent to "fill the void" until the King's health condition is determined, the official said.

The return of the King and his deteriorating health is not only being watched closely here at home, but also by concerned neighbours who are worried about what the region, without the King's moderating influence and commitment to peace, will look like.

(News agencies contributed to this report).

A woman prays outside Al Hussein Medical Centre for His Majesty King Hussein (Reuters photo)

## Palestinians, Israel argue at U.N. on conference proposal

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The Palestinians on Friday appealed to the U.N. General Assembly to fix an early date for a special U.N. conference to protect Palestinians in Israeli-occupied territories.

Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Dore Gold, firmly rejected the initiative as "totally unacceptable to the state of Israel."

The exchange took place at a reconvened emergency special session of the 185-nation U.N. General Assembly, which was due to vote on a non-binding resolution later in the day after some 20 speakers addressed the forum.

The draft resolution "recommends that the High Contracting Parties convene the said conference on 8 April, 1999 at the United Nations office in Geneva."

After a series of meetings in Geneva, said Al Kidwa, "now, we believe we have reached the end of the line."

But Gold strongly opposed the conference which he said would set a dangerous precedent. "In repeated cases of wars of aggression, ethnic cleansing, and even genocide, the high contracting parties did not meet a single time," he said.

The resolution "ignores the many cases of real aggression since 1949, and

seeks to apply the Fourth Geneva Convention selectively in only one case, the case of Israel."

Furthermore, he said, "it ignores the fact that today most Palestinians are under an expanding Palestinian administration, and not under Israeli military administration."

Gold said it was "not just offensive, it is vulgar" to apply to Israel the convention which was set up after the horrors of World War II.

Washington is also opposed to fixing any date for the international conference, pointing to the timing of such an event just ahead of Israeli elections in May. Western diplomats said.

In a bid to dilute support for the Palestinian move, which is supported by the U.N. Arab group and non-aligned states, the Israeli delegation has faxed Israel's position to the U.N. mission.

## Donors to give Palestinians \$770 million this year

FRANKFURT (R) — International donors on Friday said they would give \$770 million this year to support Palestinian development investment in a move aimed at shrugging up the Middle East peace process.

The funds would come on top of the \$2.5 billion in aid payments made since the 1993 Oslo peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians, officials said.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said he was delighted with the result of his meeting with donors. "I am very pleased about what

has happened," Arafat said at a joint news conference with German Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul.

Palestinian officials secured the funding after presenting a new five-year development plan designed to build up the economy and infrastructure of the West Bank and Gaza.

Wieczorek-Zeul said Germany had pledged 140 million marks (\$81 million) this year for development projects, making Bonn the largest single foreign aid provider to the Palestinians.

Arafat had urged 30 donor nations and eight international organisations, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, to help peace efforts by speeding up aid for projects including water and sewage systems.

He said the Oslo peace agreement needed economic as well as political support. "It is not possible to imagine the success of our striving for peace without the two together: politics and economics," Arafat said.

Arafat said the Palestinian economy had suffered

of restrictions imposed by the Israeli government, five years from the start of the peace process," he said.

Israeli representatives walked out of the donors' meeting. "The Israelis were clearly unhappy about some of the things the Palestinians said in their presentations," a World Bank spokesman said.

Conference sources said the Israelis objected to a map showing Arab east Jerusalem as Palestinian territory. Israel claims the eastern half of the city as part of its capital.

## Butler to relinquish U.N. arms inspection post

UNITED NATIONS (R) — After months of unrelenting criticism from Iraq as well as Russia, Richard Butler has decided to leave his post as chief U.N. weapons inspector when his two-year contract expires in June.

He was adamant that the problem was not his tenure as head of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) but whether Iraq would ever cooperate on arms inspections.

In an interview with Reuters on Thursday, Butler said he "would not be seeking a renewal of my contract." He said some people believed that if he were removed from his post, "everything would be restored, Iraq would cooperate, there would be health in the system."

"This is a very serious subject. Keep your eyes on the main subject," Butler said. "And that is disarmament."

"I want my organisation to make its contribution to reformulating where we go next, to getting the United Nations back into Iraq to do the disarmament and monitoring job that is required," he also told a small group of reporters.

Some 400 activists from Arafat's Fatah movement held an angry protest Friday in the southern Gaza town of Rafah to demand that the Hamas men who killed the security officer on Monday be executed.

United States. He had indicated to Australian newspapers previously he might not stay on past June but his new comments were the clearest statement yet of his intentions.

Russia's Ambassador Sergei Lavrov has conducted a fierce campaign against Butler, calling almost daily for his ouster and accusing him of being biased and unprofessional.

Lavrov, backed by China and France, wants UNSCOM abolished and most of its duties farmed out to other disarmament groups.

His criticisms intensified after a report Butler submitted on Iraq's lack of cooperation on arms inspections that triggered the mid-December U.S.-British air strikes. No inspectors have been allowed back into Iraq since then.

But the United States has continued to back UNSCOM although it agreed to dilute its influence by allowing other disarmament experts to participate in a new Security Council panel that will evaluate Bagdad's arms potential.

Peter Burleigh, the U.S. chief envoy at the United Nations, called Butler and UNSCOM "heroes." A day earlier in Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin

said "the Iraqis have been shooting the messenger in complaining about Ambassador Butler for a long time. We believe Ambassador Butler has done a fine job."

Washington, however, is fairly isolated in the U.N.

The United States is concentrating on how to remove President Saddam Hussein from power and on the almost-daily cat-and-mouse engagements over air excursions in Iraq, with U.S. planes attacking ground defences.

UNSCOM was created by the Security Council after the 1991 Gulf War to account for Iraq's biological, chemical and ballistic weapons, which Baghdad had developed.

It recruited arms experts from various countries, most of them paid for by their respective governments. From the start it was the most intrusive U.N. arms control operation with its own intelligence operation.

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was in charge of nuclear arms which Iraq was close to developing but had not produced yet.

But in conducting more traditional, passive U.N. inspections, it had missed construction of the nuclear programme before the 1991 Gulf War.

U.N. report says 17 killed, 100 injured by stray U.S. missiles

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Two missiles which hit civilian areas in southern Iraq last week killed 17 people, including 10 children, and injured 100 others, according to a U.N. report obtained by the Associated Press.

The report, obtained Thursday, did not say who fired the missiles that landed Jan. 25 in the poor Al Jumhuriya neighbourhood in the port city of Basra and in the village of Abu Khasib, about 25 kilometres to the south.

The Pentagon acknowledged that a U.S. missile fired at air defence targets near Basra missed by kilometres and struck the Al Jumhuriya residential area. But there has been no claim of responsibility for the missile strike on Abu Khasib, which is also called Abu Fulous.

Immediately after the two missile strikes, Iraq said at least 11 people were killed and 59 were wounded.

But according to the report from Hans von Sponeck and other U.N. officials that the missile killed one woman and five children, according to the report.

Von Sponeck was told that 64 people were injured and 30 were still hospitalised during the U.N. visit, the report said.

The U.N. team visiting the area verified that seven houses had been completely destroyed and a further 27 houses sustained damage. The damage was caused by both direct impact and the blast effect to the missile," it said.

In Abu Khasib, a village of about 400 houses, five women and five children died and 30 people were injured, the report said.

## Hamas activists, PNA police clash

NABLUS (AFP) — Hundreds of Islamist activists clashed with Palestinian police Friday during a protest march through Nablus to demand the release of fellow activists held in Palestinian jails.

Dozens of police armed with batons tried to stop around 2,000 marchers — Hamas supporters and relatives of the prisoners — from parading from a local mosque to the centre of the city, witnesses said.

The protesters threw stones and bottles at the police, who eventually withdrew, letting the marchers hold a brief rally in front of city hall before the crowd dispersed under a cold winter rain.

Another 2,000 protesters held a similar march through Hebron in support of prisoners in Palestinian jails, but that demonstration passed off without police interference.

Marchers in Hebron held banners reading "Jail criminals, not heroes," and "No to

Hamas and the smaller Islamic group have been on a hunger strike in Nablus' Jneid prison for two weeks to protest their detention.

The difficult relations between Hamas, an Islamist movement which in addition to having a military wing runs a vast charity network, worsened sharply this week after a security officer was shot and killed during a police chase of car carrying Hamas activists in the Gaza Strip.

Police subsequently rounded up several dozen Hamas activists and said they had discovered an Iranian-financed plot for the movement to carry out attacks on Jewish settlers in the Gaza Strip.

Some 400 activists from Arafat's Fatah movement held an angry protest Friday in the southern Gaza town of Rafah to demand that the Hamas men who killed the security officer on Monday be executed.

## Palestinian president calls peace process irreversible

WASHINGTON (AP) — Despite a slump in Mideast peacemaking, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat called the process of reconciliation with Israel irreversible and the opening of a "new chapter" in the troubled Middle East.

He also reaffirmed his confidence in the Palestinians achieving statehood and told some 3,000 religious leaders and members of Congress at a luncheon that a Palestinian state would live side by side in peace and reconciliation with Israel.

Earlier Thursday, at the 47th annual National Prayer Breakfast, President Bill Clinton reviewed with Arafat the stalled Wye accords, which called for tighter security measures

by the Palestinians and a pullback on the West Bank by Israel.

White House spokesman David Leavy said Clinton had reminded Arafat that unilateral declarations of statehood "aren't helpful." But while the administration doesn't want Arafat to declare that there will be a state whatever the outcome of negotiations with Israel, it does not object to what officials call assertions of Palestinian aspirations.

In fact, on a visit in December to Gaza, Clinton spoke approvingly of the Palestinians having a chance to "determine their own destiny on their own land," Hassan Abdul Rahman, the chief representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Wash-

ington, said "it was a very friendly meeting and a very cordial meeting." Rahman said there was no discussion of Israeli allegations that the Palestinians append and then quietly release terrorism suspects in a "revolving door" justice system. Clinton, in a speech at the prayer breakfast, made a now-familiar pitch to Israel and the Palestinians to put aside their differences for the sake of a settlement.

"You do not make peace with your friends, but friendship can come, with time and trust and humility, when we do not pretend that our wilfulness is an expression of God's will," he said.

Arafat was warmly received at the luncheon.

despite calls for a boycott, and be reflected on Palestinian peacemaking with Israel under the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The widow of the slain Israeli leader, Leah, was in the audience as Arafat praised "the courage and commitment" that Rabin demonstrated.

He said he, too, was committed to pursuing peace, and called it irreversible for the sake of Palestinian and Israeli children. Before Arafat left for home, he was invited to return in April for more talks with Clinton.

Also, on Feb. 16 a joint U.S.-Palestinian commission will meet in Washington to strengthen cultural and scientific relations with the Palestinian National Authority.

## Lebanon blames Israel for worsening situation in south

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Salim Hoss said Friday Israel was responsible for the deterioration of the situation in the south and maintained that all people have the right to resist occupation.

"It is most extraordinary that the aggressor should make accusations against the victims of aggression and blame them for acts of resistance which is a legitimate right of all peoples whose land is occupied," he told journalists.

Hoss, who is also foreign

minister, was reacting to a letter sent by Israel Thursday to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, which said Lebanon was responsible for the escalation of violence in the border strip, and deserved Israel's right to defend itself.

"If Israel is unhappy with the situation in southern Lebanon, all it has to do is implement unconditionally Security Council Resolution 425 and withdraw from the region without falsifying the truth," he said.

The resolution, passed in 1978, calls for Israel to pull out of the border zone uni-

right terrorism against Israel," he added.

Hoss told journalists that it was Israel, which occupies a strip of Lebanese territory along their common border, who was responsible for the violence.

Laterally and unconditionally. Gold repeated his country's willingness to comply with the resolution, but stressed that peace and security must first be established along the border.

Lebanon has refused to give any guarantees to Israel and links any negotiations with a renewal of talks between Israel and Syria. Syria is demanding the return of the whole of the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in 1967 and illegally annexed in 1981.

in return for a peace treaty.

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## Sudan seeks UNICEF aid in slavery probe

GENEVA (AP) — The Sudanese government has asked UNICEF to head a probe into the existence of slavery after repeatedly denying that such a trade existed on its territory, the humanitarian agency said Friday.

The initiative was taken at the same time as Khartoum staunchly denied a report last month by Swiss aid agency Christian Solidarity International (CSI) saying it had "bought back" a total of 5,000 slaves in Sudan over the last four years for \$52,000.

Ali Ahmad Al Nasir, head of a government committee set up in 1995 to investigate claims that the slave trade was being practised in Sudan, said Sunday if such activity took place, it was in areas held by rebels.

For the first time Sudan, through a parliamentary human rights commission, last week asked UNICEF to compile a report on the charges of CSI, which had repeated an appeal for action against slavery to the United Nations.

"The government of Sudan has opened the door to UNICEF in a very encouraging manner because this NGO has an impact on opinion," UNICEF spokeswoman Marie Heuze said.

The U.N. agency is seeking involvement of other groups in the project, notably local and international organisations, Heuze said.

If this apparent opening by Khartoum does indeed carry through, it would break with established policy. UNICEF

noted.

"In Sudan, the authorities have always denied the existence of this problem and do not even accept pronouncement of the word 'slavery,'" Heuze said.

The huge east African country ratified in 1990 the convention on the rights of the child, pledging to implement all the treaty's articles intended to protect youngsters.

A report on measures taken in this respect was handed over in 1997 to the U.N. body overseeing treaty compliance, but the text has never been approved nor published, the spokeswoman said.

"Slavery in Sudan exists. You can use any terms you wish. It also exists elsewhere," such as in west Africa and Asia, she said.

Although welcoming the publicity CSI gives to the scourge, UNICEF criticised its tactics.

The organisation could never support the "absolutely intolerable" measure of buying back a human being.

Heuze said, arguing that this strategy supported trade in human trafficking.

"It serves to feed arms trafficking in the civil war in southern Sudan. Any time the traffickers get hold of cash, particularly dollars, it is spent on arms," she said.

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BEST WISHES TO THE KING: A Jordanian man waves a portrait of His Majesty King Hussein and a Jordanian flag while walking in a central Amman street Friday as the King is brought back from the United States to his home town. Prayers were held for the recovery of the Hashemite King but a palace source said today that King Hussein was close to death on his arrival in Jordan and was being kept alive on a life support system after all major organs except his heart failed (Reuters photo)

## Turkish Cypriots reject proposal for peace force

### Nine Kurdish rebels killed in southeastern Turkey

DIYARBAKIR (AFP) — Nine rebels of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) were killed in clashes with Turkish security forces in the southeastern Anatolian province of Batman, the emergency-rule governor's office in Diyarbakir said Friday.

The fighting occurred on Thursday during a security operation in rural areas of the province, it added.

There were no casualties reported on the Turkish government side.

Fifteen PKK rebels and eight soldiers were killed Wednesday in clashes in Batman and the Tunceli province in eastern Turkey. The PKK has been fighting for a Kurdish homeland in southeastern Turkey since 1984. The violence has claimed almost 31,000 lives.

A state of emergency rule has been in force in the region for over a decade to facilitate the Turkish military's combat against the rebels whom Ankara regards as "separatist terrorists."

The PKK is led by Abdullah Ocalan who left Italy on Jan. 16 for an unknown destination via Russia and whom Turkey wants to try on terrorism and murder charges.

which was created in 1983, is not recognised by the international community, and relies on Turkey both militarily and economically.

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## Plans under way to amend law encouraging honour crimes

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — Justice Minister Jawdat Sboul has said the government is considering urgent plans to amend legislation that allow a reduction in penalty for killers who commit crimes of honour.

Sboul said during a lecture late Wednesday that his ministry and the Cabinet were doing their utmost to finalise a draft law before sending it to Parliament for approval.

"I want to assure everyone here that this issue (honour crimes and related legislation) is a major concern to us," he said.

"And Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor are pushing for such changes so we have to finish them within a very short period," Sboul added.

He was referring to Article 340 of the Jordanian

Penal Code No. 16 of 1960, which provides reduced or waived penalties to persons found guilty of killing female relatives who commit adultery or are found in an adulterous situations.

Most men who commit such crimes benefit from a reduction in penalty. On many occasions, they end up receiving sentences ranging from three months to one year, depending on the circumstances of the case.

Between 25 to 30 women are reportedly killed in the Kingdom each year in the name of family honour.

The Royal Palace has asked the government of Prime Minister Fayed Tarawneh and the government preceding it to prepare amendments that would eliminate contradictions in the judicial process concerning violence against women.

Sboul, addressing members of the Rotary Club of Amman, said the government was also revising the entire Penal Code to meet changes of the modern world.

"Overhauling the entire legislation is not an easy task," he explained. "But we are exerting utmost efforts to tackle what is needed and to make the necessary changes to meet the requirement of every-day changes," he said.

Sboul said he was aware of the snail-paced process at Jordanian courts.

"We realise that the judicial process is slow and we are working to improve it," he said in response to a question raised by a member of the audience. "The salaries of judges have already been increased and all measures have been taken to guarantee their independence," he noted.

The ministry has hired eight court inspectors in the past six months to check on the judiciary and on court procedures.

"We have provided the best atmosphere for these inspectors, and I have promised them that I will not neglect any report they submit to me on any violation or misconduct they come across," he said.

Sboul said he was trying to battle detection orders issued by prosecutors after working hours on Thursday as detainees end up in jail for two days until offices reopen on Saturday to accept a bail request.

"Many times people who are detained on Thursday are innocent but are forced to spend two days in prison and I hope that I can at least introduce changes that could apply to individuals who commit minor offences," he said.

## Jordanians pray for King Hussein in vigil lasting till late night hours

By Ahmad Khatib

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the official Petra news agency saying the King was returning home at his wish to continue his treatment.

"I cannot imagine a day without him around us," said Safia Alnaf, as she wept. "He is a great leader, a father and a brother who always took care of the country and navigated it through difficult times."

Another shopkeeper said: "When King Hussein returned from the U.S. on Jan. 19, we thought it was the end of our pain and his agony with cancer. But this has not stopped and will not as he has served our country and his people like nobody has," said one shopkeeper.

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"It is a sad day," said Salim, an advertising manager. "But whatever happens, we must overcome our sorrows as life has to go on," he added. "I believe such an attitude will also satisfy our leader, King Hussein, and will maintain country's progress, for which the irreplaceable leader fought for long time."

## British officers assess Jordan's family protection facilities

By Rana Husseini

AMMAN — Two British police officials, on a week-long visit to examine Jordan's family protection facilities, have met officials for talks on how to improve these facilities and deepen bilateral cooperation.

Tony Butler, Chief Constable at the Gloucestershire Constabulary, told journalists at the Family Protection Unit — affiliated with the Public Security Department — that the visit was designed to enhance future cooperation in the area of family protection.

The team is in Jordan at the invitation of His Royal Highness Prince Hassan to examine the Jordanian experience in the field of family protection.

Butler praised Jordan's family protection efforts and said he sensed a great feeling of commitment to improve the situation from all officials he met, including the chief of the PSD, representatives from the ministries of interior, justice and social development, judges and criminal prosecutors.

"I sensed a strong willingness and positive commitment

by officials to improve the procedures in dealing with victims of domestic violence and to alleviate their trauma and make them more relaxed," he said.

He said Jordanian leading judges he met "did not seem to oppose the idea of introducing new methods to hear victims of abuse at courts."

In many developed countries, victims are usually allowed to testify in a separate room on a video camera connected to the court room to help them avoid their alleged aggressors.

Detective Inspector Paul Purnell, child Protection coordinator at the Gloucestershire Constabulary, said that the Jordanian experience in the field "will become a model for countries in the region."

"We are looking at making the Jordanian model a model for other countries in the region," said Purnell. "We are also aiming to teach trainees to enable them to train their colleagues on how to deal with the issue of domestic violence," said Purnell.

Referring to Britain's family protection experiment, Purnell noted that more acci-

dents were reported by individuals because of an increase in confidence towards police and Child Protection Unit.

Lieutenant Colonel Fadel Hmoud, head of the Family Protection Unit, told the Jordan Times that the PSD had many ideas to improve the family protection facilities and to increase the size of the current building, located in Shmeisani.

The unit, which opened in September 1997, deals monthly with cases of sexual offences on or against women and children under 18 as well as child abuse.

"We are studying the possibility of expanding the current building in order to start receiving victims of domestic violence," Hmoud added.

"We are still new in this field and we do not have a shelter for women. This is why we have not dealt with cases of domestic violence yet," he said.

The unit has so far received 295 cases, a fraction of which formed incidents of violence that occurred within the family.

Of the total cases, 242 were referred to courts, 38 to

social development experts and 15 to administrative rulers.

The PSD signed an agreement with the ministry of social development and the Jordan River Design recently to enable social experts working in the unit to give social support to victims and their families.

The centre is staffed by police officials specialised in sociology, psychology and law.

Two months ago, police officials decided to stop wearing unofficial uniforms to ensure a relaxed atmosphere for the victims.

"We decided to wear civil clothes to provide psychological assurance to victims we meet," he said. "We also do not want to draw the neighbour's attention when we go out to the field to investigate."

Hmoud said future plans included setting up "similar units in other governorates, depending on the number of reported cases in each area."

"We are studying and analysing our experience and based on it we will move to other cities and provide the same services," he said.

## 50 journalists join press association

AMMAN (Petra) — Seventy new journalists joined the Jordan Press Association (JPA) on Thursday after taking the oath before Minister of Information Nasser Judeh.

The latest batch of journalists raised the JPA's membership to 455 members.

Judeh said, "with the oath, journalists pledge to work conscientiously and responsibly in serving their country and in seeking to promote the profession."

He said he was pleased to hear that the JPA has embarked on constructing a complex to house the association's offices, a press club and an institute for training new journalists. "These are basic factors in promoting the profession and improving the skill and efficiency of journalists," Judeh said.

Judeh expressed hope that the JPA will enforce a

code of honour outlined in the association's new law to ensure that all journalists remain committed to integrity, objectivity and accuracy in their work and to respect the country's laws and regulations.

JPA President Self Sharif welcomed the new members and paid tribute to His Majesty King Hussein who he said has supported the association by enabling it to acquire a plot of land to build the new complex.

He noted that the association has already engaged the services of a local engineering office to supervise the implementation of the project.

Sharif also paid tribute to five journalists who passed away recently and lauded their efforts as pioneers and early founders of the association in Jordan.

Sharif thanked the government and the Greater

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's

streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

### Jordanian editor detained on court order

AMMAN (AFP) — The editor of a weekly Jordanian newspaper was given a 15-day detention order by a court here Thursday for violating the national press code.

Fahd Rimawi of the Al Majed weekly is charged with "insulting the Monarch, publishing false information about the prime minister and members of the government and attacks on the security service," Information Minister Chief Iyad Kattan said.

Rimawi wrote in Tuesday's edition of the paper that Prince Hassan — who was dismissed as acting regent and heir to the Throne last month by King Hussein — laid his revolver down before the King and asked to be shot if King thought he was a traitor.

In previous issues Rimawi had called for the prime minister and his cabinet to resign. He is due to be freed on bail while awaiting trial.

## What's Going On

### CONCERT

• Musical performance by pianist Saleem Abboud Ashkar at the Royal Cultural Centre on Sunday Feb. 7 at 8:00 p.m. (Performance includes pieces by Beethoven, Schubert, Bach, Chopin, and Schumann).

### FILM

• "The House of Spirits" at Books@Café, Jabal Amman on Sunday Feb. 7 at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650458).

### EXHIBITIONS

• Paintings by Olivier Debré at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Feb. 25. • "Winter 1998" exhibition at the Arts Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 5529610), until Feb. 14. • Works by Mohammad Al Saifi at Books@Café, Jabal Amman, until Feb. 13 (Tel. 4650457). • Works by Victor Vasarely at the exhibition hall of the Ministry of Culture, until Feb. 8. • The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funoo, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until Feb. 25.

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1998, the Iraqi trade minister said recently.

Plans for a 1,000-km-long oil pipeline between the two countries have been under discussion for several months. It would link the Haditha oil field, 260-km north west of Baghdad, with the Jordanian port of Aqaba, via the Zarqa refinery, 20-km north of Amman.

The pipeline, with a capacity of 150,000 barrels per day, would move Jordan \$55 million a year which it currently spends on transporting crude by road. The cost of building the Haditha-Zarqa section is put at

\$350 million.

Housani said both countries were keen on boosting bilateral trade exchanges. However, he said nine-year-old U.N. sanctions imposed on





## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation Established 1975

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## Carrying the torch

JORDANIANS SPENT yesterday and last night glued to their television screens switching from one TV station to another to hear news about their beloved King Hussein. Many braved the cold weather conditions and lined up at the gates of Al Hussein Medical Centre offering prayers for the King and country. Meanwhile news agencies, world television stations, and journalists from over the world descended on Amman to relay news about the King's health. Journalists as far as Latin America were calling their colleagues in Amman for updates on the King's health and insights about the country's future.

Jordanians of course have genuine reasons to be concerned. Only two weeks ago they were out in the streets in the hundreds of thousands to celebrate the King's homecoming after he returned home from six months of treatment for cancer. Only one week after that they saw him board his plane once more and head back to the Mayo Clinic, suffering a relapse of cancer. And then yesterday they saw glimpses of the ambulance that carried him from the Queen Alia Airport to Al Hussein Medical Centre.

Jordanians trust His Majesty's choice of HRH Prince Abdullah as heir to the Throne. They put trust in the King's decision to ensure their security and prosperity as they have on so many occasions in the past. But Jordanians, who grew up with the King and who have known no other leader, are also very saddened that a life's journey is about to end.

Meanwhile the interest that the world media has shown in the King and Jordan is a reflection of the stature the King achieved for himself as an active player on the Middle East scene. Not only is he the longest serving leader in the region, the King, and Jordan, have played a crucial role at all junctures in this region starting from the moment he assumed his powers in 1952. Thus it is no wonder that the most frequently asked question put by foreign journalists has been what will Jordan look like after King Hussein.

The answer they heard from Jordanians of all walks of life is that Jordan will continue to be the stable country it has been and that they will all be working to carry the torch that His Majesty has been carrying for the past 47 years.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ru'i's Khairallah Khairullah said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon sent envoys to the U.S. in order to thwart Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat's efforts there. "Bibi" did not hesitate to instigate religious fundamentalist groups to announce their boycott of the breakfast, which was attended by President Bill Clinton and Arafat, said Khairullah. With clear and effective Jordanian support, including efforts to establish agreements between Israel and the PNA, the Palestinian success is now obvious in the U.S. The importance of Arafat's attendance at the breakfast is that the ceremony included Clinton himself and 3500 American and international personalities. In other words, said the writer, the Palestinian people's representative has become acceptable to the U.S. institutions, which, in the end, dominate the country. Khairullah hoped that some Palestinian groups, which, he said, might serve Israel's Likud, did not exist at this stage.

Al Dustnur's Ali Safadi said the last thing that the government should discuss is the two-day holiday as there are many important issues that concern citizens. If the government considers that the subject comes under administrative reform, it should not be a priority in this regard, added Safadi. Developing and activating administrative legislation and structure and ridding them of corruption in order to achieve efficiency in harmony with the people and the leadership must be the government's top priority, he said. A comprehensive review of the national march requires the government to rush to solve unemployment, poverty, economic depression and other crisis, the writer stated.

## U.S. half-baked plan could be disaster

THOUGH SADDAM HUSSEIN does not enjoy much popularity with his own Iraqi people, nor among Arab heads of states in the region adjacent to Iraq, the recent attempts to rally Arab help to topple him is bound to fail. It has become evident that the United States has a serious problem in dealing with the Middle East. It takes the Arabs for granted and where that is not possible, adopts scare tactics. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Well, this time around, it is not working. It will not work because the U.S. is trampling over Arab sensitivities. In addition, the U.S. seeks to create more fait accompli in the Gulf region that will clear the ground for whatever actions, drafted by American strategists in any eventuality, and that includes replacing any Arab regime at will. Hence, Washington's determined campaign to secure the support of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and others in U.S. efforts to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

But Washington has run into resistance from the region. All the countries which Martin Indyk, Washington's pointman in the ongoing effort to oust Saddam, visited in the Gulf on his latest tour, indicated they oppose the use of force and are in no mood to

### LETTERS

#### Prayers for His Majesty King Hussein

##### To the Editor:

WOULD YOU please convey to your readers the heart-felt sadness my wife and I felt tonight when we heard that King Hussein was gravely ill, and was rushed back to his country.

We were so impressed with his recent intervention in the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks in Washington. That was a rare example of personal and moral courage that transcended nationalities. We will pray to our God for your King. Our hearts go out to his wife, his family and his people.

Lawrence Connor  
Missouri  
U.S.

##### To the Editor:

I AM BRITISH living in Belgium. My prayers go out to His Majesty King Hussein, HM Queen Noor, the Royal Family and the people of Jordan.

Kenneth J. Heselwood  
Belgium

##### To the Editor:

I JUST wanted to express my personal sorrow for the news of your beloved King Hussein's condition and to offer my prayers on behalf of the Royal Family, the Crown Prince Abdullah and the people of Jordan.

Marshall H. Massengale  
Atlanta, Georgia  
U.S.

##### To the Editor:

WE ALL pray for a miracle for your wonderful King truly a great person as well as a great king.

The Windsors  
U.S.

##### To the Editor:

I AM sitting here at 1:30 am Friday, February 5, 1999 praying fervently for His Majesty King Hussein and his family. He is the greatest man I have ever met in my entire life. My heart bleeds for those who have been touched by his life, but especially for Abir, HRH Princess Haya and HRH Prince Ali — the children I was honoured to care for from September 1977 through May of 1980. I send my love

to you and my prayers for your broken hearts this day. I await news of His Majesty's condition, yet I'm left wondering. My memories of my days in Amman are some of the most precious days of my life. His Majesty treated me as one of the family. He taught me so much — tolerance, kindness, respect for all human beings. He taught me how to see the world from his eyes, and how to humble myself to such a world. He honoured me with his trust to care for his sweet children who I think of and miss daily. May God be with you all in this time of great sorrow, and may He hold you close to give you strength to face the coming days.

My Sincerest Love and Sympathy,  
Gayle M. Van Alstyne (Basaraba)

##### To the Editor:

PLEASE ACCEPT the warmest thoughts and prayers of an ordinary American citizen for a speedy recovery for your leader, King Hussein. I hold King Hussein in the highest regard, as I believe many Americans do, and I believe that history will recognise him as one of the truly great men of the 20th century. While we may belong to different cultures and be products of different heritages, I feel that all of us have benefited greatly by the gift of his life and career. I sincerely hope that all men of good conscience will study his life and strive to follow his example for many years to come. While I am sure I cannot feel the depths of your grief at this time, I do share much of your sadness over his grave condition. It is a sign of his greatness, I believe, that we realise how much we will miss him.

William Wilson  
U.S.

support the U.S.-led campaign. Such a position is definitely not a reflection of a great admiration or love for the Iraqi leader, who has indeed alienated them by addressing the masses and calling for their overthrow, but stems from the consequences of such a campaign plus an overriding compassion for the people of Iraq. The press rose to speak up against the campaign when government leaders sought to express their position in private. Either way, there can be no mistake in recognising the message: Yes, the countries of the region can do without Saddam in power in Baghdad, but they do not want the U.S. to do the honours. All changes in Baghdad should be as King Hussein has often reaffirmed, initiated and carried out by the people of Iraq, not the U.S. military or any American proxy.

The U.S. argument that it would not be directly involved in the effort does not hold water. After all, it is no secret that Washington is sitting on \$97 million (why just that figure, why not \$100 million) dedicated to toppling Saddam. Rather a cheap operation given that the U.S. collected about \$60 billion to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The U.S. has also identified the Iraqi opposition groups which are qualified to

receive chunks of the \$97 million. If financing groups to undertake certain action towards a predetermined outcome is not direct involvement, then what is?

By now, the world knows that none of the so-called Iraqi opposition groups, whether in London or Damascus or Saudi Arabia or Tehran, is capable of bringing about real changes in Iraq. None of them has the credibility or clout needed to carry out the kind of changes that Iraq needs; nor can the groups come and act together with a positive vision for the future of their country. It is a safe conclusion that they will end up divvying up the \$97 million "bounty" and the U.S. will turn to the Arabs to produce more money for more efforts to topple Saddam.

Indeed, that is judgement and conjecture at this point, but it is based on the history of similar groups in general in the Arab World, and Iraqis in particular. In any case, that is neither here nor there, but one thing is clear: the U.S. is betting on the wrong horse to bring down Saddam.

But we in Jordan have a special reason to oppose the U.S. plan. We know that any half-baked plan — which is what it is — could seriously backfire, igniting more chaos in Iraq, and directly affect

### Jordanian Perspective



Dr. Musa Keilani

its neighbours. And we Jordanians can do without having any additional burdens placed on us as a result of what might develop there between Sunnis and Shiites.

There are several valid points and reasons behind the Gulf region's rejection of the U.S. drive to oust Saddam from power, and to install a "democratic government," as senior American diplomats have put it. First of all, allowing the U.S. a free hand to do whatever it wants in the region will open the door to high-handed American action against any country in the Gulf or elsewhere which does not see eye to eye with Washington in any future

eventuality. The statement from Oman that Sultan Qaboos told the U.S. team currently touring the region that Muscat is "opposed to any interference in the internal affairs of others, and is working to secure a lifting of the embargo and to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people" sums up the collective stand of the GCC. The U.S. team, headed by Martin Indyk, should also pick its cue from the fact that such a frank and forthright statement was not only made by the Omani leader, but carried by the official media. The net sum of the emerging picture is of a United States concerned more about the security and stability of the Gulf than the countries of the region.

Washington is not only trying to tell the countries of the "dangers" they face, it is also attempting to dictate the means with which they should confront it, never mind Arab pride and dignity. Adding insult to injury, the U.S. is declaring that it is determined to go ahead with its plans regardless of what the Arabs think and believe in. Then why come to the Arabs in the first place? To ensure that someone ends up paying the bill for American-conceived and American-implemented operations that does not serve Arab interests?

## Strength in stability

Compiled by  
Mohammad Ben Hussein

Columnist last week commented on His Majesty King Hussein's decision to change his successor.

THE STATE RUN Jordan news agency, Petra, quoted the Arab politician Abdul Hadi Abu Taleb in an article published in the London based newspaper, "The Middle East," commenting on King Hussein's decision to replace HRH Prince Hassan and appoint HRH Crown Prince Abdullah as heir to the Throne.

King Hussein created Jordan in its modern form, said Abu Taleb, and after great efforts and much pressure he was able to unify its people, who believe that his presence is the only guarantee of the country's stability and continuity.

The writer praised Prince Hassan for obeying the King and receiving his elder brother's order like a soldier, a soldier.

However, who should not disappear: his country needs the experience he obtained during 34 years as crown prince.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Abdul Rahim Malhas said Jordanians were worried by the King's decision to replace Prince Hassan by Crown Prince Abdullah because the decision was unexpected. For 34 years Jordanians were assured by the King's repeated statements that Prince Hassan was heir to the Throne, but suddenly, and for reasons still not clear, the King decided to appoint Prince Abdullah as his successor, said the writer. Jordanians are not worried about the succession to the Throne as much as they are worried about the King's health, said the writer and added that they are concerned about rearranging the Jordanian house not the Hashemite family.

Jordanians expect outside attempts to destabilise the country, but they believe that ultimately Jordan will win the battle because Jordan's future and stability concerns many influential countries, said Malhas. Jordanians are worried about the problems which may occur from within the Jordanian family not outside it, said the writer. They believe in "stability for continuity," but they are concerned about people who believe in "stability for investment," sacrificing their principles for the sake of money. However, the real worry is people who want to take an advantage from the stability of the country to continue to abuse people and "suck their blood," claimed Malhas.

The writer argued that any change is accompanied by worry, but called it a great chance which could be used to defeat people who want to divide the country.

Features  
Children  
By Khalid Karmi

Beirut shop  
By Nizar Kazzaz

The S

INTERVIEW WITH A SHE

# Children of Iran's revolution want freedom and work

By Kaveh Basmenji

Reuters

THEY TOPPLED Iran's last monarch, they seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran, but 20 years on, the children of the Islamic revolution are demanding reforms from the moderate president they elected.

In a Tehran amusement hall run by a state-affiliated foundation, youths swarm around screens to play the latest U.S. and Japanese computer games. Outside, workers are erecting arches decked with green leaves and colourful lights for 10 days of celebrations marking the February 11, 1979, revolution.

"We read about the shah and the revolution in our school books, but we have other things on our minds. We want to be left alone and to have fun. Is that too much to ask?" asks Mandana, an 18-year-old girl, queuing at a Tehran cinema.

The demands of the young generation, not born when the revolution toppled the pro-Western Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, are cause for major

concern for the custodians of a system heralded by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini under the slogan of "independence, freedom, Islamic republic."

More than half of Iran's 60 million people are under 25, including 24 million at schools and universities.

At a time of economic hardship and political uncertainty, many of the young people raise demands for education, social freedom, jobs, housing and easy marriage.

"The Islamic republic is trying to harness a tremendous energy. The youth cannot remember anything about the shah and do not care about the old days, but they carry the heritage of unfulfilled dreams of previous generations," said Mohammad Qaed, publisher of the educational monthly *Lohi*.

Disillusioned with the policies of the conservative clerical establishment, the youth played a vital role in the 1997 election victory of Mohammad Khatami, who promised to attend to their needs. And they have so far supported Khatami despite his limited

powers in carrying out his reforms.

The sheer numbers of young people and strict social restrictions imposed on them pose a serious problem for any establishment, said social scientist Abbas Mokhber.

"If a fundamental solution is not found for their needs, the society could be seriously disrupted," Mokhber said.

Khatami has said repeatedly that it is essential to relax restrictions on Iranian youth if they are to be attracted to religion and safeguard the Islamic republic.

"The youth are standing firm on their votes and have not turned their back on Khatami despite economic problems. But to what extent? That remains to be seen," Qaed said.

Iranian youngsters are caught in the crossfire between traditionalism and globalisation, social scientists say.

Official educators and state media try to keep them in line with revolutionary values in the face of a Western "cultural invasion" which is transforming their lives.

Students are called on to join the

Basij, a paramilitary organisation under the umbrella of the Revolutionary Guards, which aims to safeguard the revolution against "enemies."

"We will continue the path of our Imam (Khomeini). We will not let the West's cultural onslaught take over and dilute our Islamic principles," said Amir Hossein, a 16-year-old Basij member.

But many young people enjoy easy, albeit illegal, access to pirate videos of Hollywood's latest productions, tapes of pop and rock music and Western satellite television.

Boys and girls who ardently follow and try to emulate heavy metal or rap music groups now stroll together in the capital's shopping malls or parks. Under Khatami, they are less afraid of being arrested for flouting the ban on the contact between unmarried couples or the Islamic dress code for women.

Many of the "modern" youngsters also take active part in traditional religious rituals such as the Ashura processions commemorating the martyred Shi'ite Imam Hussein.

sand people.

The authorities have warned against the danger of drugs among the youth, and the state television continually broadcasts anti-drugs clips, soap operas and panel discussions.

Officials put the number of drug addicts at 1.2 million, but an anti-AIDS campaign group said recently the actual number was closer to 3.6 million, including 260,000 schoolchildren.

Unemployment, particularly among the educated, is a major cause of worry for the young. The official unemployment rate is 11 per cent, but analysts say it is actually much higher.

"Today virtually everyone can enter universities, but there are not enough jobs for graduates," Qaed said.

Analysts say the only solution to the multi-dimensional problem of Iranian youth is a democratic approach.

"Taking them into account and asking for their help, lifting unnecessary restrictions and make them feel like they belong to this country and not treat them as strangers, because the future is theirs," Mokhber said.

## Beirut shops flaunt pirated software

By Nayla Razzouk

Agence France Presse

THE WORST thing about the unauthorised widespread use of pirated computer software in Lebanon is that people do not realise that they are doing something wrong.

Legally speaking, they may not be. Until long-awaited new anti-piracy legislation is enacted, up to 40,000 pirated software disks will continue to be shipped to Lebanon from the Far East and Eastern Europe every month without breaking Lebanese copyright law.

Legal experts here say that the 1924 law is "very vague" making it impossible to take legal action against software pirates in Lebanon, where about 95 per cent of all software is thought to be copied.

Pirate versions of software programmes, whose originals cost anything from \$400 to \$4,000, are shamelessly on display at computer retail outlets on every Beirut street corner at a price of less than \$10.

Computer engineers also buy cheap computer parts from Asian countries enabling them to sell locally-assembled computers equipped with a wide range of unlicensed free software at the bargain-basement price of \$1,000.

"Such a set-up would cost about 4,000 dollars elsewhere. Lebanon is a paradise of pirated software, as nearly every home, company, bank and government institution is using unlicensed products," said a visiting foreign com-

puter expert.

"But what hurts the industry most is that nobody feels guilty. People don't know that they are doing something wrong," said Ziad Mughrabi, owner of one of the leading Lebanese Internet providers, Destination.

"One woman even had the nerve to complain that she wanted a cheaper version of a programme — which should cost 900 dollars — when she was asked for 15!" said a computer software dealer.

Disgruntled members of the information technology community are eagerly waiting for parliament to pass an amendment to the outdated copyright law that would finally give it some teeth.

The new bill is expected to stipulate jail sentences of between one month and three years and fines of between 500,000 Lebanese pounds (\$333) and 50 million Lebanese pounds (\$33,333) for software piracy, an official at the ministry of economy said.

The draft law was approved in November by the joint parliamentary commissions after three years of deliberation and many hope it will finally be ratified by parliament in its February session.

So far the only visible lobbying efforts for software protection have come from the United States, through its embassy, visiting officials and computer companies — mainly Microsoft.

"The embassy continues to lobby senior Lebanese government officials on behalf of U.S. companies who

report piracy and infringement, and has coordinated with the Lebanese government and Washington to allow U.S. experts to provide input on the new legislation," said a U.S. embassy report.

"If Lebanon eventually joins the World Trade Organisation, as it plans, it will have to (adopt) effective legislation and enforcement of intellectual property rights protections," said the report published on the Internet.

But reports about the new law have raised fears that computer use in Lebanon will decline, leading to unemployment, and encouraging the establishment of local pirate factories which would deal a blow to a fast-growing new local software development industry.

Many newspapers and even MPs have also warned that drastic measures against software piracy will provoke a "scientific and cultural catastrophe" which will mainly hit the younger generation in Lebanon where the minimum monthly salary remains \$200.

"We know that clamping down on piracy would be beneficial for Lebanon's reputation and the inflow of foreign investment but ironically it was piracy which helped develop the computer industry in Lebanon in the first place," said an expert.

The irony of the situation is best summed up by a poster at the entrance of one of the largest stores on busy Hamra street proudly selling more than 100,000 pirated programmes, which warned: "It is not just wrong to use unauthorised software, it's a crime."

## Iraq's ex-PoWs struggle to rebuild their lives

By Tanya Willmer

Agence France Presse

130,000 dinars (\$70) the government paid him as his army salary for 16 years.

More than 90,000 Iraqi and Iranian PoWs have been repatriated since the end of the 1980-1988 war, but the issue remains a key stumbling block between the two, with both sides arguing over the number of its nationals still captive.

Baghdad says 20,000 Iraqi PoWs are in Iranian jails, while Iran claims at least 5,000 of its soldiers are still in Iraq.

"It's the forgotten conflict," rued Mardin Duvillard, deputy head of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which supervises the repatriation process and occasionally acts as mediator.

"It's a very long process, but even if it's a few hundred at a time it's a positive step," he said, adding that for many returnees another ordeal was only just beginning: to rehuild their lives in their sanctions-hit country.

His return was traumatic and confused. He was underfed, suffering rheumatism and a stomach inflammation, and Baghdad had changed so much since 1982 that at first he didn't recognise his own neighbourhood.

But five months ago, Fadel married Suaad, who had waited 16 years for her fiancé's return.

A mechanic by trade, he has also since returned to the ramshackle Baghdad car repair yard where he used to work.

Nowadays he does little more than tinker, as he tries to survive on the

much aid was handed out.

The last handover of Iraqi PoWs was on December 16, with around 200 Iraqis returning just as U.S. and British forces launched their four-day Desert Fox air war on the country.

Satar Jaber, who served as a regular soldier, also has the date of his release etched on his memory. "I was born anew on August 24, 1990. That was the date of my return to Iraq and now it's my birthday."

The 40-year-old, bell captain at Baghdad's Sagman Hotel, was released in the first major prisoner exchange since the war, after being held captive for eight years in a tent camp in a mountainous region of northeast Iran.

"We ate only a little, some rice, no meat, and a small piece of bread, that was all for a day. We had no shoes and in the winter it was freezing. The snow was more than a metre (three feet) deep, enough to cover half a man, and we tried to make paths digging out the snow with our plates," he said.

"When they punished me, I pretended it was a gift, a medal, that's how I got through it. And even after all that time, I always knew we would return, but we had no news of the outside, no radio and we didn't even know when the war was over."

But Jaber said life under sanctions was little better. "The Iranians put a sort of blockade on us, gave their 40,000 Iraqi prisoners a little to eat, some clothes, some medicine," he said.

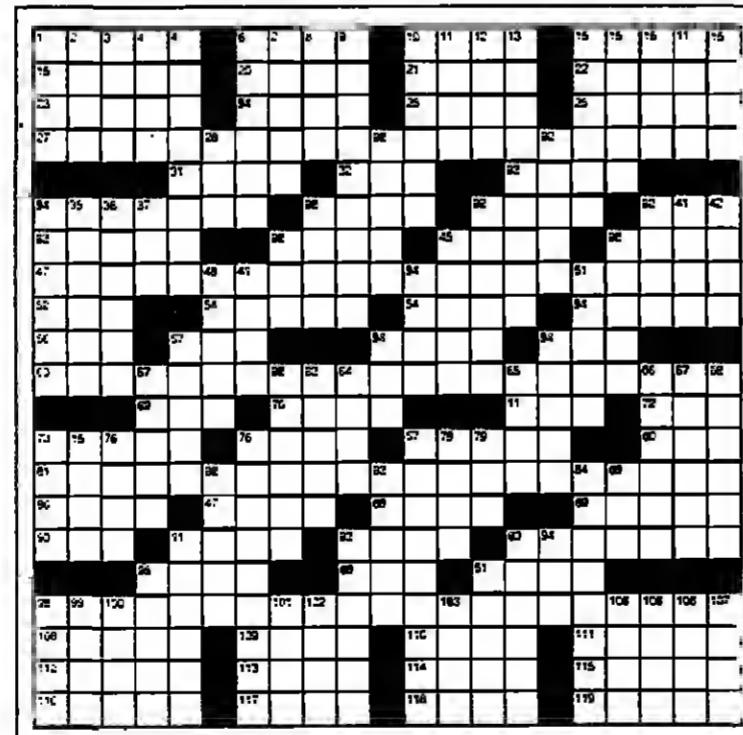
"Now I see the same blockade but from the direction of the United States and Britain, and this time it's not just against me, but all the people are suffering here, especially children."

## The Saturday Crossword

### INTERVIEW WITH A SHEPHERD

By Frances Hansen, Metuchen, New Jersey

AP Photo



## ILO official says Mideast employment outlook grim

BEIRUT (R) — Tumbling oil prices will hike already high unemployment levels in Arab countries this year and pressure governments to rethink their economic policies, an International Labour Organisation (ILO) official warned Thursday.

Samir Radwan, director of the ILO's development department, said joblessness ranged between eight and 25 per cent and was set to rise as the labour-absorbing Gulf states feel the crunch of lower oil revenues.

"The effect the drop in oil prices will have on labour is serious and the biggest challenge for the region is how to respond to it," Radwan told Reuters in an interview.

"Oil kept the economies of the Gulf going and got them used to a certain standard of living, which involved importing large numbers of foreign labour-

ers," he said.

Analysts forecast a tough year ahead for Gulf states reeling from the lowest crude prices in over 20 years. Crude exports account for 75 per cent of the Gulf's income and many nations, including oil giant Saudi Arabia, have announced spending cuts.

Several oil economies are replacing migrant labour with locals to cut their own unemployment levels, a move Radwan called a "historical mistake."

"In many cases, the locals are not as qualified as their predecessors and this will eventually backfire on the economy," he said. "The United States was built by migrant labour. Our problem in the Arab World is that we don't read history."

Austerity measures in the Gulf are particularly bad news for Egypt, Syria and the Palestinian territories where migration is a safety

valve for the overflowing labour market and remittances provide a major source of hard currency.

"These countries already have high unemployment rates and high population growth rates. They won't witness an avalanche of returnees, as the Gulf Arabs will not sink to the level of doing certain jobs, but thousands will come back," Radwan said.

The Egyptian ILO official said Middle Eastern economies needed to grow at more than three per cent to accommodate the annual three per cent increase in the labour market, but conceded it was a difficult task.

The United Nations forecast gross domestic product in the region to increase at an average 2.9 per cent this year, up from a paltry 0.9 per cent in 1998.

"There is a recession in the region and the world

and with Arab populations growing at the rate they are, it's near impossible to create the thousands of jobs needed," Radwan said.

"But governments must factor that in when they draft their economic policies. The management of the economy has to be aimed at achieving employment-intensive growth," the ILO official emphasised.

Radwan, in Beirut to attend a seminar on employment in Lebanon, said unemployment was rife among university graduates and criticised the region's obsession with privatisation.

"Privatisation has unfortunately become an ideological issue instead of one of efficiency. Arab governments should pursue privatisation but keep labour levels in mind," he concluded.

## Asia scratching for answers to financial crisis

TOKYO (AFP) — Nineteen months after the Asian financial crisis first reared its head in Thailand, the region is still in the dark about when, how and if it will recover, analysts say.

Even if economic indicators point to a return of some growth, notably in South Korea and Thailand, the biggest hurdles have yet to be cleared, experts warn, pointing to reform of the financial system, restoration of domestic confidence, and winning back foreign capital.

The former Thai finance minister and vice premier, Virabongsa Ramangkura, said that his country was an example of the region's problems, adding he was "pessimistic at the moment, or at least less optimistic than people outside the region."

"The right question is when will we stop sliding down," he added.

Non-performing loans in Thailand's banking system accounted for 43 per cent of the total at the end of December, he told a Tokyo conference titled "Prescription for Recovery of the World Economy."

"The whole banking system needs recapitalisation of more than one trillion baht, that is 20 per cent of GDP (gross domestic product)," said the Thai official. "At the moment the financial system has stopped functioning."

The impact on the real economy is severe, he said. "Over 80 per cent of our businesses are unbankable," said Virabongsa, rendering useless huge capital injections by the government.

The problem was knowing "how can we make our factories run," he said, adding that they were now operating at only 50 per cent and rising.

"In this expansion inflation is not only much lower at the comparable stage but it's also been coming down," she said.

"The need to combat high or rising inflation is typical in the post-war period what has brought expansions to an end," she added. "I would view that as a reason to have greater confidence that this expansion can last and if it lasts through February of next year it will become the longest on record."

The longest U.S. expansion was the 106-month run in the 1960s, fuelled in part by the heavy government spending on the Vietnam war. The current run is the second longest expansion since records began to be kept in 1854.

"If capital fails to flow in the whole exercise is bound to fail," he stressed.

Toyo Gyotoku, president of the Institute for International Monetary Affairs which organised the symposium, summed up the choice facing countries looking to recapitalise their

banks and businesses. They can either raise new capital on the private market, allow the government to provide capital either from borrowings or tax money, or rely on either public institutions or private foreign investors.

But in the current crisis, Gyotoku questioned whether there was really any practical solution other than calling for finance from public foreign institutions.

For Joseph Stiglitz, World Bank chief economist and noted critic of the IMF prescriptions, "foreign funds are really not an essential part of the recovery," although "they help."

On the other hand, he warned against a chain of events leading to a rock-bottom sell off of shares. This "could be interpreted in a way that would be very destabilising in the political process."

According to John Lipsky, chief economist at Chase Manhattan, "domestic capital flight was the trigger" for the crisis.

"Ultimately you have to restore public confidence, if not, foreign capital will only finance domestic capital flight," he said.

One of the keys to restoring confidence is establishing financial systems worthy of the name, said Deutsche Bank chief economist Norbert Walter.

He recalled that German

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CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	GB POUND	DEUTSCHE MARK	FRANCFRANC	YEN	SWITZERLAND FRANC	ITALY LIRA	EURO	SINGAPORE DOLLAR
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	1.0188	1.0207	1.8778	1.8388	0.1944	2.3382	0.2077	0.7080
NETHERLANDS GULDEN	1.0000	1.0200	1.0200	1.8740	1.8271	0.1900	2.3371	0.3750	
U.S. DOLLAR	1.5183	0.9795	1.0000	9.7443	8.5426	1.0088	12.1334	1.1004	3.8740
BAHRAIN DINAR	0.5325	1.0105	1.0228	1.0000	0.9783	0.1033	1.2452	0.1106	0.3770
OMAN DINAR	0.5438	1.0126	1.0148	1.0211	1.0000	0.1057	1.2715	0.1129	3.8650
QATAR RIYAL	5.1434	0.9795	0.9912	6.6581	9.4582	1.0000	12.0261	0.0683	3.6415
KUWAIT DINAR	0.4277	0.9807	0.9824	8.0301	7.7855	1.0000	0.9888	0.0000	3.4087
EGYPT POUND	4.8144	0.9068	0.9278	6.0407	8.6535	0.9381	11.2573	1.0000	
LEBANON LIRA	21.4851	0.4551	4.1399	40.3405	39.5055	4.1769	50.2312	4.4621	15.2100
U.S. DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2865	0.2722	2.6522	2.5973	0.2746	3.3025	0.2634	1.0000
GERMAN MARK	0.8957	0.1623	0.1657	8.1413	9.5860	0.1671	2.0105	0.1688	0.6088
SWITZERLAND FRANC	2.4440	0.4613	0.4710	4.5693	4.4943	0.4752	5.1505	0.5076	1.7304
GERMAN MARK	0.8957	0.1623	0.1657	8.1413	9.5860	0.1671	2.0105	0.1688	0.6088
FRANCE FRANC	8.1969	1.5472	1.5798	15.0723	1.5673	19.1657	1.7025	5.8034	
JAPAN YEN	1.8122	0.3204	0.3007	3.0769	3.0765	3.125	3.7579	3.3388	1.1379
HOLLAND GULDEN	5.1434	0.9795	0.9824	5.1710	5.0285	0.3354	6.4388	5.7202	1.9407
SWEDEN KRONA	11.1579	2.1124	2.1463	20.8145	20.4815	2.1655	26.0423	2.3134	7.8856
ITALY LIRA	24.1957	4.5572	4.6207	45.3444	44.4939	4.7043	56.5733	5.0255	17.1306
BELGIUM FRANC	50.4090	8.5152	8.7411	84.6572	92.6977	9.8008	117.8651	10.4701	35.6895
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2.2111	0.4174	0.4261	4.1519	4.0660	0.4229	5.1899	0.4952	1.5654
GREEK DRACHMA	4.0137	0.7378	0.7735	7.5369	7.3908	0.7804	8.3847	0.8337	2.8417
CYPRUS POUND	1.3774	0.5172	0.5280	5.1453	5.0388	0.5327	8.4069	0.5691	1.9400
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	17.1940	3.2457	3.3136	32.2894	31.6200	3.3431	40.2048	3.5715	12.1740
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1232	0.4025	0.4109	4.3921	4.3921	0.4146	4.9861	0.4429	1.5086
EURO	1.2406	0.2353	0.2408	2.3465	2.2978	0.2430	2.8218	0.2596	0.8847

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR											
CENTRAL BANK BULLETIN											
NOTE: NEITHER ACCESS NOR THE PUBLISHER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ERRORS OR MISTAKES.											
DEPOSIT INTEREST PRICES											
CBJA											
CURRENCY	ASK	BID	CURRENCY	ASK	BID	CURRENCY	ASK	BID	CURRENCY		
US DOLLAR	0.7080	0.7100	GBR BRITAIN STERLING	0.1575	0.1653	DEUTSCHE MARK	0.1217	0.1227	SWITZERLAND FRANC	0.4549	0.5043
GBR BRITAIN STERLING	0.1204	0.1243	1.5704	1.5704	1.5704	FRANCE FRANC	0.1220	0.1220	ITALY LIRA	0.1220	0.1220
SWITZERLAND FRANC	0.1507	0.1511	1.5670	1.5670	1.5670	JAPAN YEN	0.1223	0.1223	GBR BRITAIN STERLING	0.1223	0.1223
ITALY LIRA	1.1822	1.1822	186.6970	186.6970	186.6970	GBR BRITAIN STERLING	0.1223	0.1223	SWITZERLAND FRANC	0.1223	0.1223
BELGIUM FRANC	1.9407	2.3200	5.2207	5.2207	5.2207	DEUTSCHE MARK	0.1223	0.1223	ITALY LIRA	0.1223	0.1223
HOLLAND GULDEN	5.0490	8.5152	8.7411	8.7411	8.7411	FRANCE FRANC	0.1223	0.1223	GBR BRITAIN STERLING	0.1223	0.1223
SWEDEN K											

## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Aqel says present banking structure in Jordan will not be able to face foreign competition

\*\* "THE (JORDANIAN) banking sector in its present structure will not be able to face foreign competition should it opens to the outside world because of the small size of the banking units operating in the Kingdom, their limited financial and human resources and their inability to spend large amounts on training and technology," said Mufleh Aqel, the regional manager at the Arab Bank headquarters in Amman.

In a paper he submitted to a workshop held in Amman recently about the effect of joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the Jordanian banking sector, Aqel indicated that the "obligations which we can provide in this regard should be limited especially in the area of acquiring and managing financial institutions and the area of participating in other financial products."

"During transition periods, we should allow the entry of expertise that we lack and which can help in developing the local market," Aqel said, stressing that we should not be embarrassed from exceptions as many countries, including the United States and many European states, have took that step. He was quick to explain that he was not opposing the openness drive but rather advocating a comprehensive strategy to optimise the gains from financial openness.

Aqel proposed that such a strat-

egy could begin through adopting a formula to develop financial ties on the Arab level. "We can exchange the advantages without being obliged to provide them to countries outside the Arab fold," the senior banker said adding that that should be besides rearranging the internal Jordanian banking environment. In this regard, he mentioned forming bigger units, utilising more advanced technologies and more qualified management.

The Arab Bank's regional manager emphasised that the global drive towards liberalisation and economic integration is a comprehensive move that must be followed but with the least damage. However, he said, the coming openness will have many negative effects that will affect the economies of the developing nations which cannot compete with large and more capable economies of developed states.

Aqel saw the possibility of foreign institutions collecting local savings and investing them in their home countries where more attractive opportunities and less risks exist. Furthermore, the negative effects can be in the form of opening legal channels to suck local savings in favour of foreign investments and through influencing on the efficiency of the monetary policies followed as a result of the liberal climate that will be offered to financial institutions (Al Ra'i).

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) You like to have things the minute you think of them, but part of your lesson right now is self-discipline. It's not terrible to have to wait for what you want. You might decide you don't really want it after all. Instead of buying the first thing you see, hold onto your money and keep shopping.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) You may decide to let your partner carry the ball today. Looks like the other person will get further than you will. You may be in unfamiliar territory and a little worried about the next move. Well, your caution is well advised. There are some peculiarities about your situation. Better let a person with more experience take the lead.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) There's some sort of breakdown or disappointment today and you're the one who has to deal with it. Even if somebody else is involved, you have to make the decision. Plenty of people are telling you what to do, but nobody knows your situation as well as you do. Listen to them, but make the final decision yourself.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 22) The confusion is starting to abate and you're becoming more focused. It'll soon be apparent what needs to be done, and you'll be able to make the decision effortlessly. As long as there's still effort involved, you know the time isn't quite right. If you have to wait until tomorrow, so be it. Better late than never, in this instance.

**LEO:** (July 23 to August 22) Travel doesn't look like a great idea today. That might be frustrating initially, but you should warm up to the fact once you realise how much you can accomplish. Odds are you'll be feeling bold and brassy tonight. Again, your best place to get exuberant is in the privacy of your own home, with somebody you love — who can keep a secret.

**VIRGO:** (August 23 to September 22) Study the situation today before you take action. Things are not as they appear to be. Dig around a little to get the whole story. You love sleuthing. You're very good at solving puzzles, too, today even more than usual. Just know that now your hunches are probably right on target, so follow through on them.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) You're in for a bit of a hassle today. Don't get

pushed into a decision that's not right for you. Your wisest choice is to figure out what's going to work best for you and the ones you love, and do that no matter what other people want you to do. That's important, especially if your money is involved.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) You might as well sleep in this morning. Later, you'll get kind of antsy. Your energy level will go up and it'll be hard for you to sit still. There are lots of chores and projects that you have in mind, and you'll be a dynamo, racing around, getting everything done. Have a great time while you're at it!

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) The earlier you get started on a trip this weekend, the better your chances of avoiding delays. The longer you hang around the house, the more reasons you'll come up with to stay there. Could be friends dropping in from far away. If you think that's likely to happen, check it out. Don't assume anything today.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 19) You could attend a social gathering today that would be good for your career. If you're going to be doing business with someone, it always helps to build a relationship first in a casual setting. If you want to create a relationship where there isn't one, ask for coaching. Today, learning could be an avenue to success for you.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 20 to February 18) Continue to stretch yourself — mind, body, attitude — to take in more and more. You're in an expansive phase, so don't hold back. Get uninhibited, at least as much as possible within self-defined parameters. Maybe you could stretch those parameters, too. Do a little work on that this evening, with the help of a good friend.

**PISCES:** (February 19 to March 20) This would be a great weekend for you to run a marathon. You're full of energy, and you want to stretch your barriers, stretch your boundaries, stretch your mind, stretch your legs, stretch everything. You'll be way in front of the pack before you even know what happened. Watch where you're going, however. There are hurdles to jump over.

Birthstone of February:  
Amethyst — Onyx

## Partners sabotage shopping sprees, says survey

LONDON (AFP) — Bored husbands and fussy women are costing stores up to 25 per cent extra sales by sabotaging their partners' shopping expeditions, according to research out Friday.

Men employ favourite tricks to escape shopping altogether, and both sexes annoy each other constantly when they do make it out to the shops.

The survey by a retail group found that men complain about traffic or lack of parking to avoid going out, and sulk about missing sport on television or appear bored when they do eventually go.

Men also infuriate their partners — described as the driving force behind most shopping trips — by urging them to grab the first thing and rush to the till.

Women are liable to study every shape, size and colour before making their choice, and accuse men of wanting to buy the cheapest thing on offer.

But women annoy their

partners too, by asking questions such as:

"Does my bum (U.S. butt) look too big in this?" and then complaining about the answer, the survey found.

They often reach the head of the queue and then disappear, deciding they need something else.

Feminine wiles for curtailed a tour of men's shops were much more subtle, the research found.

Men said their partners would complain of tiredness, aching feet and "not being well," or pretend they were worried about the children or where the car was parked.

Both sexes agreed that they would spend as much as 25 per cent more in the shops than they intended if their partners offered more supportive advice.

The survey urged retailers to do more to lure reluctant shoppers, such as offering adult "creches" — "imaginative places where the disaffected partner can be parked happily while shopping goes on."

COMPANY	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE
	PRICE	PRICE	
<b>BANKS</b>			
ARAB Bk	213.000	215.000	+0.94%
NTL Bk	1.510	1.510	0.00%
BLD OF JO	1.180	1.200	+8.40%
MIDDLE EAST Bk	1.020	0.970	-4.90%
INDUSTRIAL DEV. Bk	1.510	1.480	-3.31%
THE HOUSING Bk	2.700	2.750	+1.85%
JO. KUWAIT Bk	1.850	1.890	+2.42%
JO. GULF Bk	0.700	0.680	-2.86%
JO. ISLAMIC Bk	1.680	1.680	-1.19%
UNION Bk	1.050	1.000	-4.76%
JO. INVEST. & FIN. Bk	1.340	1.280	-3.73%
BET EL MUL	0.890	0.700	+1.45%
PHILADELPHIA Bk	0.520	0.520	0.00%
<b>BANKS INDEX</b>			
	280.810	point =	+0.81%
<b>INDUSTRY</b>			
CEMENT	3.800	3.580	-5.58%
PHOSPHATE	2.850	2.350	+14.63%
ARAB POTASH	3.780	3.970	+4.38%
PETROLEUM REFINER	10.880	10.880	+0.85%
JO. TANNING	5.300	5.150	-2.83%
THE IND. COMM. & AGRIC.	1.850	1.080	+2.86%
ARAB PHARMACEUT.	2.860	3.150	+4.62%
CERAMIC IND.	1.170	1.240	+5.85%
TOBACCO & CIGARET.	1.200	1.350	+10.83%
JO. PIPES	1.080	1.130	+5.63%
NTL STEEL	1.500	0.500	0.00%
DAR AL DAWA	5.250	5.450	+4.21%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLE.	0.550	0.540	-1.82%
JO. STEEL	0.920	0.920	0.00%
ARAB ALUMINUM	1.900	1.850	-2.63%
CHLORINE	1.250	1.240	-0.80%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.380	0.400	+5.26%
NTL IND.	0.350	0.350	0.00%
PETRO - CHEMICAL	0.320	0.300	-6.25%
<b>INDUSTRY INDEX</b>			
	92.890	point =	+3.05%
<b>PARALLEL</b>			
I EXPORT Bk (75)	0.800	0.810	+1.11%
JO. TRADING FACILIT.	0.400	0.380	-5.25%
CENTRAL STORG.	0.350	0.350	0.00%
UNION INVEST. CORP.	0.850	0.870	+4.82%
AL. EKRAL	0.800	0.840	+6.25%
ADVANCED PHAR.	0.550	0.520	-5.88%
AL. SHARQ	1.000	1.000	0.00%
MEDICAL APPLIANCES	0.400	0.400	0.00%
AL. DAWIJA	0.580	0.580	+1.72%
ARAB INT'L TRADE	0.210	0.200	-4.76%
SPECIALIZED INVEST.	1.040	0.850	-18.50%
OPTICAL & AURAL	0.410	0.420	+2.44%
READY MIX CONCRET.	0.850	0.800	-6.51%
CENTURY	1.200	1.150	-4.17%
NAMCO	0.240	0.240	0.00%
ELECTRICAL IND.	0.350	0.350	0.00%
IX MIDDLE EAST PHAR.	0.650	0.600	-7.69%
UNION TOBACCO	3.350	3.850	+14.93%
AL-RAZI	0.560	0.560	0.00%
UNITED ENG. IND.	0.220	0.180	-13.60%
BETL CERAMIC	0.400	0.380	-5.00%
NTL POULTRY	0.550	0.530	-3.64%
NUTRI-DAR	0.720	0.700	-2.78%
<b>GRAND INDEX</b>			
	178.19	point =	+15.1%

## Mergers seen necessary for Lebanon bank growth

BEIRUT (R) — Merger

Financial analysts and

the Bank of Lebanon

have been advocating

mergers in Lebanon's

banking sector for

years. There are 68

banks in Lebanon,

which was the financial

bubble of the Middle East

before the outbreak of

civil war in 1975.

They said last month's

takeover deal between

two leading banks

would give acquisitions

an added edge in

an industry criticised for

having too many small

banks and not enough

institutions that can

handle regional busi-

ness.

"It's not much being

the number one bank in

Lebanon any more,"

said Bassam Yammine,

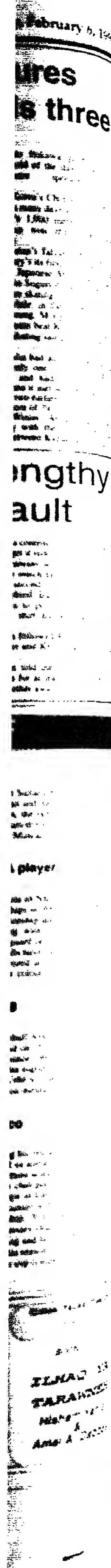
senior manager of the

corporate finance divi-

sion at Lebanon Invest,

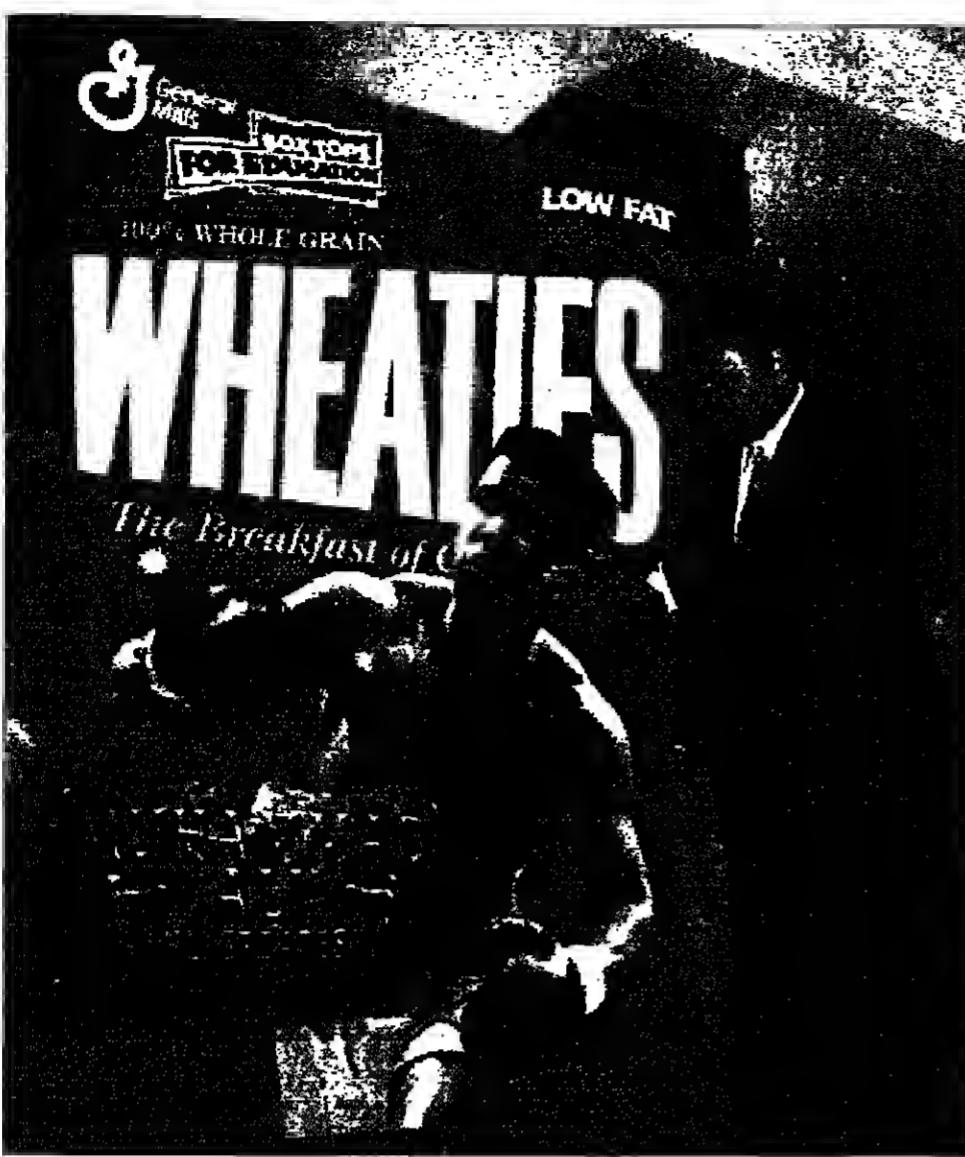
ref





## Sports

### Ali finally accepted by breakfast cereal



Muhammad Ali touches a younger version of himself which is on the special edition Muhammad Ali Wheaties' box that marks the cereal's 75th anniversary. Feb. 4. Wheaties, "The Breakfast of Champions," is honouring the man widely accepted as one of the greatest athletes of all time (AFP photo)

NEW YORK (R) — Wheaties finally became the Breakfast of Champions Thursday.

Many years after Muhammad Ali came to be revered around the world the people who sell the corn flakes decided it was politically and profitably correct to jump onto the fabled boxer's bandwagon and put his picture on their cereal box.

Ali joins a long list of American sports heroes — although the first African American was not until Walter Payton in 1986 — to be so prominently featured by the 75-year-old brand which bills itself as "The Breakfast of Champions."

The former three-time heavyweight champion has been dramatically slowed by Parkinson's disease and can only murmur his words.

But as is demonstrated Thursday at a news conference at Madison Square Garden — the site of some of his most memorable fights — the 57-year-old Ali still is able to project the renowned, often irreverent wit that annoyed, dazzled

and ultimately captivated people around the world.

Before that, however, he was reviled by many in America for his refusal to be drafted into military service for the Vietnam War. His explanation became legendary: "Man, I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong."

For his refusal to be drafted, Ali had his boxing license suspended.

Ali was asked why he thought it took Wheaties so long to recognise him.

"The Vietnam War. We ended up admitting it was wrong and we shouldn't have been there ... all the talking 'I'm the greatest' and all the bragging and the style I had when I first started that stopped," said Ali, adding to laughter, "I'm still pretty."

And then in vintage Ali, the former Cassius Clay, the man they once called "The Louisville Lip", said with a slight smile to the reporter, "you're not as dumb as you look."

Ali's wife, Lonnie, said it more simply when answering for her husband about the cheek.

Wheaties delay in recognising him: "At the height of his career in the 60s, he might have been a little too controversial ... (The Wheaties box) was an honour a long time coming."

After the curtain was dropped from a large picture of the Ali Wheaties box, Ali gently rubbed the photograph of his chin and dutifully posed for publicity shots with fists slowly churning at his side.

But the symbol of the Ali that especially in recent years has endeared himself to millions of people around the world came as he was leaving.

Clusters of children were heading toward the entrance to see the circus. They gathered around him as if he were a pied piper.

And the former fighter, who once a long time ago had the quickest feet and fastest hands of anyone, slowly stooped, and like grandfathers everywhere overcome by a special desire, gently picked up first one and then another little girl and kissed her on the cheek.

And then in vintage Ali, the former Cassius Clay, the man they once called "The Louisville Lip", said with a slight smile to the reporter, "you're not as dumb as you look."

Ali's wife, Lonnie, said it more simply when answering for her husband about the cheek.

### AC Milan move back into top 10 in club rankings

LONDON (R) — Former European champions AC Milan moved back into the top 10 in the European club rankings for the first time since November this week thanks to their 3-2 win over Salernitana last Sunday.

Milan, who jumped two places, will have a tough task retaining their position as they travel to Florence to play Serie A leaders Fiorentina on Sunday.

Fiorentina are second in the rankings but are well adrift of leaders Bayern Munich. Lazio, on an eight-match winning streak, are third and have a good chance of a ninth consecutive victory with a home game against Perugia on Sunday.

#### TOP 20 CLUB RANKINGS (last week's position in brackets)

			Points
(1)	1	Bayern Munich	Germany 100.94
(3)	2	Fiorentina	Italy 91.04
(2)	3	Lazio	Italy 90.54
(4)	4	Parma	Italy 87.21
(6)	5	Girondins Bordeaux	France 86.36
(7)	6	Bay Leverkusen	Germany 84.19
(5)	7	Olympique Marseille	France 82.88
(8)	8	Inter Milan	Italy 82.49
(9)	9	Dynamo Kiev	Ukraine 81.93
(12)	10	AC Milan	Italy 78.88
(13)	11	Manchester United	England 78.35
(16)	12	Barcelona	Spain 78.00
(11)	13	AS Roma	Italy 77.25
(14)	14	Rosenborg Trondheim	Norway 76.94
(15)	15	Dinamo Bucharest	Romania 76.91
(10)	16	Celta Vigo	Spain 75.39
(22)	17	Porto	Portugal 74.38
(18)	18	Partizan Belgrade	Yugoslavia 73.90
(26)	19	Real Madrid	Spain 73.88
(21)	20	Rapid Bucharest	Romania 73.64

### Chaos helps NBA global group grow

WASHINGTON (AP) — Now, more than ever, National Basketball Association teams will rely on talent from beyond the United States to build championship clubs in a chaotic season.

Teams play 50 games in 90 days starting Friday after a labor dispute wiped out three months and 32 games and touched off an unprecedented wave of transfers and long-term contract deals.

Dutch center Rik Smits anchors favored Indiana. Jamaican-born Patrick Ewing mans the middle in New York. African-born centers Hakeem Olajuwon of Houston and Dikembe Mutombo of Atlanta make their teams contenders.

But a new set of centers will test the stars, led by Shaquille O'Neal, NBA Rookie of the Year Tim Duncan and Lithuanian Zydrunas Ilgauskas, who signed a six-year deal with Cleveland worth \$71 million.

"As the older guys move on, the Patricks and Olajuwons, you will choose from Tim Duncans and Shaquilles," Cleveland coach Mike Fratello said. "You have to look at the other guys up there and I think Ilgauskas has the potential to be an All-Star."

The rebuilding Chicago Bulls have signed Kornel David, the NBA's first Hungarian player, moved Canada's Bill Wennington to start at center and focused the team around Croatia's Toni Kukoc.

"Toni has stepped up as our go-

to guy," Bulls coach Tim Floyd said. "He will have to do a lot and we will give him the freedom to do it."

An Australian trio could have a major impact, with former Bulls center Luc Longley now in Phoenix, Chris Anstey manning the middle in Dallas and long-range sharpshooter Andrew Gaze joining San Antonio.

"Luc has looked quite good," Phoenix coach Danny Ainge said.

"He's not a player who does anything great. He does a lot of things good. He's a good passer, a good shooter, has a big body and experience."

"We're excited to have him. I don't want to put a lot of pressure on him. I don't think he is a superstar. He fills a role for us. Luc has played on some great teams and that has to rub off to some extent."

Gaze will join former Bulls guard Steve Kerr in providing an outside threat to go with San Antonio's inside powers, David Robinson and Duncan.

"He's one of the premier shooters in the world," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "This guy is a good enough player that he can jump right in. The (cut to) 50 games does hurt him as far as bav-ing a better shot to get into the main rotation."

"He hasn't had time to get used to the system, both ours and the NBA. It takes a little time. It's tough to make that big a jump that quickly."

Anstey surprised Don Nelson with his work ethic, literally forcing the Dallas coach to find him a pivotal role on the team.

"I have to find a way to play him this year even though I am very deep in (power forwards). I assumed he needed another hard year of practicing. Anstey is right up there ahead of some of the guys."

He has had tremendous training camp.

"He is a very playable player. He's wiry, strong and very clever. He's a very bright guy and gifted athletically. I can't believe a guy who can do those world class things at 7 feet tall can't be a great player."

Canadian guard Steve Nash has also impressed the Mavericks' mentor.

"He's another player who is going to get a lot better but we think he is awfully good right now," Nelson said. "He's as good an all-around player as I have ever had at point guard."

But the top global star in Dallas is German Dirk Nowitzki. He averaged 13 points, six rebounds and three assists in two exhibition games.

"He's terrific. We're very excited about him," Nelson said. "He can do all the things you want him to do. He's awfully good right now. I would hate to see what he's going to be like in two or three years."

Vancouver has the NBA's top

Hispanic talents, Venezuelan Carl Herrera and Dominican rookie Felipe Lopez.

"I have been very impressed at what Felipe has done so far, getting in our rotation," Grizzlies coach Doug Hill said. "He's very good off the dribble, attacking and getting to the free throw line."

He has the attitude and work ethic, the talent and enthusiasm.

There's no reason down the road he can't be a starting guard in the NBA."

Long-suffering Sacramento has Yugoslavians Vlade Divac and Predrag Stojakovic, who averaged 15 points and five rebounds in two exhibitions.

"He has got a great feel for the game," Kings coach Rick Adelman said.

On Divac, Adelman added, "One of the big things he has brought to this young group is he's a leader. He's encouraging all the time."

I was surprised he would be that vocal. He's pushing the other guys to stay positive. He does adapt. He finds a way to make others more effective."

Nigerian-born Michael Olowokandi, the top pick in last year's NBA draft, joins a Los Angeles Clippers team that lost 65 times last season.

"He's a bright young man with a great upside," Clippers coach Chris Ford said. "He's ready. Some guys are playing themselves into shape."

### Salt Lake committee to reorganise in wake of scandal

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt and Salt Lake Organising Committee Chairman Robert Garff have unveiled a sweeping reorganisation plan for running the 2002 Winter Games that is more open and has better oversight.

The reorganisation announced Thursday would include 17 or 18 new spots on the SLOC board of trustees. The board's executive committee would be replaced with a new management group ordered to keep a tight rein on planning.

The proposal by Garff and Leavitt will be voted on next week by the full board. That vote will come two days after it gets a report from an independent ethics panel investigating Salt Lake City's bid.

Investigators have found the bid committee gave more than \$1 million in cash, free medical care, travel and scholarships to IOC members or their relatives before the 1995 IOC vote giving Salt Lake City the bid.

Garff said he and Leavitt have not offered the job of SLOC chief executive to anyone and refused to discuss Mitt Romney, the man believed to be the front-runner. Romney is a Boston venture capitalist and former Republican Senate candidate.

The new chief executive would replace Frank Joklik, who resigned Jan. 8 but remains on the job until he is replaced.

The 17 or 18 new board members, to be chosen by Leavitt and Mayor Deedee Corradini, likely would be ready to join the board on Feb. 11, Garff said. "We

have a reasonable expectation it will be approved," he said.

Garff and Leavitt declined to say whether board members who also were on the bid committee will remain on SLOC.

"We'll have to see if any of those people are implicated," Garff said. "We will review those facts and then take decisive action."

The roles of First Security Corp. Chairman Spence Eccles and PacificCorp Vice President Verl Topham, who are both on the current executive committee, have come under question. They were enlisted during Salt Lake's bidding for the games to watch over staffers now blamed for excesses.

Leavitt declined to say whether restructuring of the board might mean ridding it of business men who are doing business with SLOC.

The SLOC ethics committee investigating the scandal also has looked at contracts awarded by the SLOC board to some of its members. A \$23.2 million contract went to a construction company headed by board trustee Alan Layton to build a top for a speed skating oval. SLOC board member Earl Holding is owner of Snowbasin ski resort, where the downhill races will be staged.

The reorganisation is designed to broaden community representation and give more responsibility to the management committee. However, the enlarged board of trustees would lose its decision-making authority, playing only an advisory role for the management committee.

Besides the seven at-

large members elected by the full board, the management committee would include Leavitt, Garff, Corradini, a new SLOC president and chief executive, four athletes, three U.S. Olympic Committee officials and two IOC representatives.

Leavitt on Thursday also elaborated on a statement that he knew little about the excessive spending on International Olympic Committee members by a few bid executives.

He said he met about 50 IOC members and their families, posed for photographs and gave obligatory gifts of diplomacy.

"I did not ever personally see a gift of great value," Leavitt said.

He said he did not know that the international students he met were sons and daughters of IOC members, some supported by bid money, and he repeated an earlier assertion that the lavish spending was hidden from him and the bid committee by bid executives.

"Was there a pattern of deception? Yes," Leavitt said.

"They had to hide it. I didn't see it and I don't know of anyone else who did."

Leavitt dismissed allegations to the contrary by Tom Welch, the former bid committee president who has been blamed for the excesses.

"It's not unexpected from someone who is feeling a lot of pressure because of past actions," Leavitt said.

In other scandal developments: Welch denied he told the Cable News Network in a telephone interview on Wednesday

that the bid committee took \$50,000 in cash to Budapest, where the IOC chose Salt Lake for the games. In a news release Thursday, Welch said he told CNN that he didn't know about any cash, but if it was carried to Budapest, it was to pay routine expenses of the Salt Lake delegation.

—Rep. Merrill Cook, Republican of Utah, said the \$150 million Congress has approved so Utah can prepare its highways, airports and mass transit systems before the Olympics is safe.

Rep. John Dingle, Democrat of Michigan, has asked the General Accounting Office to determine whether Salt Lake is being rewarded with federal dollars after using shady means to get the games.

That money cannot now be withdrawn, and neither can the legislation that authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to give funding priority in coming years to Salt Lake and other host cities, Cook said.

However, securing money might be tough in the future, he said. "It's a political reality that Congress is nervous about giving federal funds to projects tainted by scandal. We have our work cut out for us."

—The Washington Post said FBI agents and Olympic ethics investigators are examining evidence that Salt Lake Olympic organisers used airline tickets to disguise illicit payments to several IOC members.

It said the tickets, bought at premium prices by the IOC member from South Korea denied today that Salt Lake City Olympic officials helped find a job for his son in the United States and reimbursed part of his salary.

Kim Un-yong, the only member of the IOC's executive board implicated in the Salt Lake City bribery scandal, said the allegations against him were part of a plot to discredit him and his close ally, Olympic chief Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Kim spoke in reaction to USA Today's report that Kim's son, Kim Jung-boon, was employed by a Utah company, Keystone Communications, at the request of Salt Lake City officials who campaigned to land the 2002 Winter Games.

Vieira and striker Nicolas Anelka (all Arsenal).

The game will help the French warm up for their next Euro 2000 home

## Knesset adopts budget after funds added for settlers, religious causes

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's parliament finally adopted a state budget for 1999 early Friday but only after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to more spending for Jewish settlements and religious causes.

After an all-night debate which often degenerated into shouting matches and insults between deputies of the governing coalition and the opposition, the budget was passed at dawn by a vote of 48 to 34 in the 120-member Knesset.

Netanyahu, who holds the finance portfolio since minister Yaakov Neeman resigned in December out of frustration with coalition haggling over the budget, had to agree to a series of demands from minor right-wing and religious parties to finally get the law passed.

In total Netanyahu agreed to additional spending of

551 million shekels (\$137 million) in a total budget of around 215 billion shekels (\$54 billion).

The last minute changes involved promising an additional \$38 million to Jewish settlers in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights for settlement construction, tourism development projects and additional security.

The rest of the increase mainly concerned funding for religious education and other projects demanded by ultra-Orthodox groups and the ultra-nationalist National Religious Party.

A further \$2.5 million was promised for subsidised housing for new immigrants at the demand of the Russian immigrant party Israel B'Aliya.

But Netanyahu insisted he had limited the extra spending to levels traditionally doled out during budget debates in the multi-party

but would be financed out of reserves and that the government's target of limiting the budget deficit to two per cent of gross domestic product would be respected. The deficit stood at 2.4 per cent of GDP in 1998.

The last minute spending increases agreed by Netanyahu fell far short of what the smaller parties in his unruly coalition had been demanding and which some estimates put as \$500 million.

Opposition Labour Party deputies charged that Netanyahu had made behind the scenes promises to some parties that would double the additional spending for their pet projects if he wins reelection in May.

Opinion polls show Netanyahu running neck-and-neck against his main challenger for the prime ministership, Labour Party leader Ehud Barak.



WOMEN ATTEND VIGIL FOR KING: Several women weep Friday under heavy rains outside Al Hussein Medical Centre in Amman, where His Majesty King Hussein is hospitalised (AFP photo)

## Serbs reject talks with KLA, block rebel negotiators

PRISTINA (AP) — Serb authorities put weekend peace talks on Kosovo in jeopardy Friday, blocking ethnic Albanian rebels from leaving for France and later saying they won't negotiate with the guerrillas at all.

"We will never negotiate with the terrorists," Serb delegation chief Ranko Markovic told reporters in Paris.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the abrupt announcement meant the Serbs would boycott talks as proposed by world powers, but it underscored the huge negotiating obstacles even if all sides take part.

Five members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) were set to be a part of a larger ethnic Albanian delegation at talks scheduled to start at Ramouillet outside Paris on Saturday afternoon.

But the Kosovo Albanian delegation remained in Kosovo on Friday after an hours-long diplomatic stand-off, with Serb officials reportedly balking because two KLA members lacked passes.

Markovic's comments suggested the issue went beyond passports.

"We consider the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army a terrorist organisation, and with killers and kidnappers we have nothing to talk about," Markovic said.

He said the Serbian delegation, which arrived in Paris Friday afternoon, was ready to negotiate only with ethnic Albanian politicians. But the Kosovo Albanians signalled earlier that they are certain not to agree to such a move.

In a rare show of solidarity, political figures who have long been at odds with the guerrillas refused to leave Kosovo without their fellow negotiators.

The United States and its five European allies had hoped to include all Kosovo's factions in the negotiations, and U.S. chief negotiator William Walker said he was "shocked" at the Serbs' refusal to negotiate with the rebels.

"I would say they are missing the point of what negotiation

are," Walker said by telephone in Pristina. "We had such pronouncements earlier, but things would usually change."

U.S. special envoy Christopher Hill demanded in Paris that all Kosovo Albanians slated to participate be allowed to depart for France.

Officials of the six-nation Balkan Contact Group, who had been working to get the KLA members to Paris, pressured government officials into the evening to drop their resistance, but with no visible results.

Meanwhile, hoping to keep the pressure on Western powers announced further preparations for a peacekeeping force. British Defence Secretary George Robertson announced he was putting several military units and 8,000 troops on standby for possible deployment in Kosovo.

The Serb defiance came only a day after the Serbs grudgingly had accepted participation in the talks in Ramouillet, where world

powers demand they reach a political settlement with Albanian separatists to end 11 months of war.

Deepening the skepticism surrounding the talks, ethnic Albanian officials criticised the Serbs' selection Friday of a mixture of top allies to President Slobodan Milosevic and little-known ethnic leaders as negotiators.

Rexhep Qosja, a Kosovo Albanian politician and negotiator, complained that the Serb delegation is too low in rank to make any hard decisions. "It is not an echelon that can make decisions," he said.

Most of the Kosovo Albanian team had planned to fly to France early Friday afternoon in a C-130 jet sent by the French government, although three of five KLA negotiators had already left via other means.

But the two other KLA members reportedly stayed away from the airport, awaiting assurance they could board the plane without being arrested. The political representatives on the Albanian

team returned to the provincial capital when the impasse wasn't resolved.

"We are not going to leave Pristina if we are not compensated," said negotiator Veton Surroi.

An official for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which runs the Kosovo monitoring mission, delivered a blunt message: "The Serbs will be held accountable if the Ramouillet talks do not go forward," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Four notable Milosevic allies besides Markovic were among those named as Serb negotiators: Yugoslav Deputy Premier Nikola Sainovic, Vlado Kutlesic, Vladimir Stambuk and Vojislav Zivkovic.

But the eight others were obscure representatives from mostly tiny ethnic communities in Albanian-majority Kosovo.

The composition of the Serb government team indicates that Serbia will insist on its

## U.S. weighs sanctions against Russia over proposed arms sales to Syria

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States may withhold some \$50 million in aid to Russia if Moscow proceeds with weapons sales to Syria, the State Department said Friday.

The sanctions would be imposed under U.S. law that requires that certain assistance be withheld from any foreign government that supplies lethal military equipment to a country identified as a state sponsor of terrorism, such as Syria, a department official said.

"Approximately \$50 million of assistance to the

Russian Federation could be at stake under the relevant statutory provisions," the official said.

It was not immediately clear what type of assistance could be withheld.

The official said Washington's concerns about Moscow's proposed arms sales were raised with Russian leaders during Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's recent trip there.

Russia's first deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov has vehemently criticised the threat of U.S.

sanctions.

The ITAR-TASS news agency quoted him as saying that Moscow "would react accordingly to this sort of threat."

On Thursday, a Russian newspaper reported that a Syrian military delegation was in Moscow negotiating a five-year, two-billion-dollar arms deal.

Syria is seeking to modernise its army, 90 per cent of whose hardware is currently Russian or Soviet, requiring up to one million dollars a year in Russian spare parts.

"Iran is an independent country and does not accept any foreign interference... The judiciary rejects an inquiry team or fact-finding mission of any sort," he told worshippers

Cyprus says missiles on Crete will be operational

NICOSIA (R) — Russian anti-aircraft missiles originally destined for Cyprus but diverted to the Greek island of Crete will be fully operational rather than merely stored there, Cypriot officials said on Friday.

The missiles were re-routed amid Greek and Cypriot fears that their installation on Cyprus would increase tensions with Turkey and wreck the island's bid to join the European Union.

"The decision of Greece and Cyprus stands that these missiles will be installed in Crete and will be fully deployed," government spokesman Christos Stylianides said.

It was not immediately clear whether Greece or Cyprus would control the S-300 missiles.

ANKARA — Turkey is increasingly anxious about U.S. air strikes against northern Iraq from its Incirlik base, fearing a creeping U.S. policy that could end in chaos in Baghdad or the nightmare of a Kurdish state on Turkish borders.

U.S. jets flying from the joint Turkish-U.S. base attacked seven Iraqi air defence sites in northern Iraq last weekend.

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, a critic of the Western-imposed Iraqi no-fly zones while in opposition, has yet to explicitly challenge U.S. insistence recent strikes were purely defensive. But a note of scepticism about U.S. policy has been clearly audible here since the veteran leftist-cum-nationalist took office last month.

A false alarm warning of an Iraqi missile attack on Turkish soil recently only added to the tension.

Ankara is uneasy because you don't know when dealing with a great power like the United States how it will behave or if it will one day pre-

sent you with a fait accompli," Seyfi Tashan, head of the independent Foreign Policy Institute, said.

The fait accompli haunting Turkey above all would be the division of Iraq and creation under Western sponsorship of a Kurdish state or protectorate above the 36th Parallel.

"This is certainly the fear that is in the back of Mr. Ecevit's mind," one government source said.

The area has been beyond Baghdad's control since the 1991 Gulf War and is patrolled by U.S. and British warplanes under Operation Northern Watch.

Washington has forged agreements with rival Iraqi Kurdish groups the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, who now control northern Iraq. U.S. assurances this is not the first step to a Kurdish state have done little to calm fears here, especially among nationalists who are quick to revive memories of a Western plan in the 1920s to create a Kurdish state at Turkish expense.

The creation of such a state

could pose acute problems for a country which has been fighting Kurdish separatist guerrillas for the last 14 years, at a cost of 29,000 lives.

Inevitably, claims would be raised for inclusion of mainly Kurdish-populated areas of Turkey above all would be the division of Iraq and creation under Western sponsorship of a Kurdish state or protectorate above the 36th Parallel.

"This is certainly the fear that is in the back of Mr. Ecevit's mind," one government source said.

The official view is that concessions to the PKK, viewed by Ankara as little more than butchers and drug traffickers, or to any other proponents of self-rule would prompt disintegration of the Turkish state and dismemberment by hostile neighbours.

The creation of such a state

edition of this," he said.

Government sources say Turkey, though heavily backed by the United States in its diplomacy, most recently in unsuccessful efforts to win Ocalan's extradition from Italy, feels its losses from international sanctions against Iraq imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait are given scant attention.

Critics say Turkey could ease its problems by accepting a decentralisation of power. It lacks, however, the strong government necessary for any such initiative.

Ankara, while not supporting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in any way, does not want to be seen abetting dismemberment of any Arab state. It also fears the chaos that might follow a U.S.-engineered coup in Iraq.

In an interview with the conservative newspaper Turkiye on Monday, President Suleyman Demirel recalled that half a million refugees had flooded into Turkey as a result of the 1991 Gulf War.

"Turkey does not want a re-

sentation of those, as seen from Ankara, is long.

Opponents of reformist President Mohammad Khatami insist that the murders are part of a foreign plot to weaken institutions within the regime still dominated by the conservatives.

But reformers close to Khatami say that the murders were the work of hardliners close to the conservatives and have demanded a thorough overhaul of Iran's intelligence services and the replacement of their conservative head, Intelligence Minister Hojatoleslam Ghorbanali Dorri-Najafabadi.

The entry of any foreign mission for an inquiry into murders or any other judicial matter is prohibited," conservative judiciary chief Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi said.

"Iran is an independent country and does not accept any foreign interference... The judiciary rejects an inquiry team or fact-finding mission of any sort," he told worshippers

at Iran's main weekly Muslim prayers at Tehran University.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### NYC police slaying of man probed

NEW YORK (R) — Officials on Friday were investigating why four police officers fired 41 shots at an unarmed immigrant street peddler with no criminal record, killing him as he entered his Bronx apartment building. "It looks like one guy may have panicked and the rest followed suit," a police official who spoke on condition of anonymity told The New York Times on Friday. Police identified the man as Ahmed Diallo, 22, and said he was unarmed and had no previous criminal record. Friends said Diallo immigrated from Guinea after fleeing civil strife in Mauritania in 1997. Working 12-hour days as a peddler on Manhattan's 14th Street, he sent much of his earnings home to his parents in West Africa, they said.

### Khatami to meet Pope

VATICAN CITY (R) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami is scheduled to meet Pope John Paul II during a visit to Italy next month, Vatican sources said on Friday. They said the meeting, the first by an Iranian president since the Islamic revolution and the fall of the Shah in 1979, was tentatively scheduled for March 11, the final day of Khatami's four-day visit. The Arabic newspaper Al Hayat reported on Friday that Khatami would invite the 78-year-old Polish-born Pope to Tehran during their meeting but sources could not confirm the report. The Vatican and Iran have always enjoyed full diplomatic ties, the sources said. Khatami, a Shiite cleric who is widely seen as a moderate reformer, will deliver a speech during his trip to the European University Institute in Florence, which is expected to include a message to Europe. He is also expected to visit France.

### Canadian diplomat robbed in S.Africa

CAPE TOWN (R) — Canada's top diplomat in South Africa was attacked by an unknown robber who tricked his way into the Pretoria-based envoy's hotel room in Cape Town, the Canadian High Commission said on Friday. The attacker, pretending to be a member of the luxury hotel's maintenance staff, drew a stun gun on High Commissioner James Bartleman, 60, tied him up and robbed him of his valuables, the commission said in a statement. Bartleman, who was in Cape Town to attend the opening of parliament by President Nelson Mandela on Friday, sustained a fractured nose and injured foot, but was released from hospital on Friday and travelled back to his home in Pretoria. He said the assault had helped him to understand the crime-plagued daily reality of life in South Africa.

### Death row convict exonerated

CHICAGO (R) — A man who spent 16 years on death row and who came within two days of execution was ordered released from prison on Friday after another man confessed to the double murder of which he was convicted. Judge Thomas Fitzgerald of the Cook County Circuit Court ordered Anthony Porter, 42, released at the request of prosecutors while they investigate a videotaped confession. Porter's backers said he had exonerated him. Porter was in the courtroom and wept at the judge's decision. His lawyer said the confession and other evidence makes it "very clear that Mr. Porter did not commit this crime." Just two days ago a private investigator and a team of Northwestern University journalism students produced a confession from Alton Simon, 48, of Milwaukee, who said he committed the double murder in 1982 in a drug deal gone sour.

### Four Danish sailors die in accident

HAMBURG (AP) — High waves and winds of up to 160 kilometres an hour sank a Danish coastal ship in the North Sea on Friday, killing at least four seamen. The bodies were recovered and two others from the ship Petri Folmer were still being sought near the wreck west of Sylt Island. One of the five-man crew was rescued by helicopter. Rescue boats were also searching for a seaman reported overboard by a fishing ship off the northern coastline, a rescue office statement said. The water level in Hamburg harbour was 5.7 metres above normal but was forecast to slowly recede over the weekend.

### U.S. Navy, merchant ships collide

VIRGINIA BEACH (AP) — A U.S. Navy destroyer and a Saudi merchant ship collided early Friday in the Atlantic Ocean, about 40 kilometres off the eastern city of Virginia Beach. No one went overboard, and the only injury was a broken arm suffered by a sailor aboard the USS Arthur W. Radford. The 172-metre-long Radford was conducting routine operations when it and the 200-metre container ship Saudi Riyadh collided. The Saudi Riyadh, from Saudi Arabia, was heading to Baltimore. Bows on both ships were damaged, but damage assessments remained incomplete. Lt. Cmdr. Bill Spann, spokesman for the Navy's Second Fleet, said the Norfolk-based Radford, commissioned in 1977, was headed to the Norfolk Naval Base, where divers will inspect the hull for damage.

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